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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

**THE EXPERIENCES OF ANGLOPHONE ELEMENTARY
PRINCIPALS WITH FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAMS**

**BY
NICOLE LAMARRE**



A THESIS

**SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND
RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION**

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"IT REALLY TOOK ME ABACK. ONE OF THE
ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENTS TOLD ME AT
THE TIME, AS HE SHOOK MY HAND,
'CONGRATULATIONS BOB, YOU'RE NOW
BILINGUAL I'"

(Transcript B, lines 1293-1298)

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EDUCATION IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION.

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To Donald, Ann, Michelle, Lise, Céline and Melvin

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate what it means for an anglophone principal with little or no knowledge of French to administer a French immersion program in an elementary school in Alberta. The design of the study was based upon the interpretive paradigm. The number of interviewees was limited to eight elementary principals whose administrative experience with French immersion varied from two to eleven years. In essence, respondents were of the opinion that a lack of knowledge of the French language did not hinder their role as an administrator of a school with a French immersion program, although they admitted that French language proficiency would definitely be an asset. However, they did perceive the following factors to be essential to the effective administration of a French immersion program. They are: commitment, understanding of the context of French immersion programs, communication, and dependence on others. Principals also identified their concerns and advice in regard to French immersion programs. They gave various reasons for choosing to support French immersion. They discussed their understanding of the program in terms of the nature of their students and parents, the resistance or opposition to French and the acculturation of teachers. They emphasized the need for effective communication skills when marketing the program and working with parents and parent groups, and felt that interpersonal skills were crucial in fostering a healthy school climate. All principals interviewed identified their main coping strategy as that of depending on others when faced with responsibilities such as the evaluation of the French immersion teacher's language proficiency, the evaluation of teachers

with problems, the evaluation of pedagogical aspects of teaching, judging students' achievement, dealing with curriculum matters and communicating in French. They commented on concerns such as the availability of French immersion teachers, language versus pedagogical skills, unilingual Francophone teachers, transferring students, and having them stay together for six years. Themes which reflected the essence of being an anglophone principal of a French immersion school included a growth experience, working with others, balancing programs, and the potential for conflict. Some pieces of advice given by principals related to the value of experience, building a network of resource people, and increasing one's knowledge of the target language.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in the early sixties in Eastern Canada, the French immersion program concept has flourished throughout Canada and some parts of the United States.

Curtain and Rhodes (1985) report that "The immersion programs have been more thoroughly researched than any other innovative program in education. They have put Canada in the forefront of second language teaching in the world" (p. 96). For instance, the United States has been following the Canadian example as a model for its own immersion programs such the Milwaukee project.

Over the last fifteen years, several French immersion programs have been established throughout Alberta. Although the programs have enjoyed much success, educators and parents have wondered how unilingual administrators with little or no knowledge of French have been able to adapt their role to suit the needs of the program.

In fact, there are those who believe that the success of the immersion programs should be attributed entirely to the federal funds for French as a second language education and the commitment and efforts of immersion parents and teachers. Rideout (1987) found that "Many of the principals in the study [of dual-track schools in British Columbia] were passive in their administrative style, tending to allow the majority of parents or teachers to decide the direction for school goals" (p. 99). Moreover Lemire (1989) contends that "The demands and expectations

placed upon these men and women [anglophone principals of French immersion programs] appear unrealistically high considering their lack of training and initial lack of knowledge in the area of French immersion" (p. 4).

There exists contradictory views on the role of the principal of a French immersion program. Some maintain that administering a French immersion program is no different from being the principal of a regular English school. Others claim that the work of French immersion principals requires much more work and time than that of an administrator of a regular school (Lemire, 1989). Again there is criticism directed at Anglophone principals because there is an assumption that they cannot be effective instructional leaders if they lack knowledge of the French language, especially when it comes to assisting and evaluating the French immersion teachers, their use of language and their pedagogical skills (Moquin & Starésina, 1987).

This study does not deal with the effectiveness of Alberta anglophone principals of French immersion schools nor does it dispute the assignment of anglophone principals to French immersion schools. Rather, it relates some of the experiences of immersion administrators who have little or no knowledge of French.

General Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the study was to investigate what it means for an anglophone principal with little or no knowledge of French to administer a French immersion program in an elementary school in Alberta.

List of Specific Research Questions

The specific questions addressed by the study were:

1. What were the administrative experiences of principals of French immersion programs?
2. What kinds of issues and concerns about administration were raised by the principals in the study?
3. In what ways did a lack of knowledge of French affect the principal's role as an administrator?
4. What critical incidents had the principal experienced because of a lack of knowledge of French?
5. How have principals coped in these situations?
6. What advice would principals give to other French immersion school administrators?

Significance of the Problem

In terms of practical considerations, it was hoped that this study would increase the awareness of what anglophone administrators are actually faced with when administering French immersion programs. This study should be of interest to present and future principals of French immersion programs in elementary schools of Alberta since it proposes some advice pertaining to the successful administration of French immersion programs.

Teachers may find the study informative as it could heighten their awareness of and develop their understanding of the principal's role.

Superintendents and school boards may also find this study interesting in that it could reveal some coping strategies that some principals use when successfully administering a French immersion program and could suggest possible in-service topics.

This study might be of interest to parent groups involved in French immersion programs in that they may develop a greater awareness and understanding of the principal's work.

Because research on the work of anglophone administrators of elementary schools is limited, this research may generate some interest on the part of researchers to explore this area to a greater extent.

Assumptions

The assumptions underlying this study are that administrators who are not French speaking will have to make accommodations for their lack of fluency, and will be able and willing to recall accurately what they did. Also it is believed that the data resulting from the in-depth interviews will be relevant in understanding what it really means for an anglophone principal to administer a successful French immersion program.

Delimitations

Although this study was concerned with perceptions of eight principals from various school districts in Alberta, it may not reflect experiences of other administrators of French immersion programs.

The study participants were delimited on the following bases:

The principals had to be administering a French immersion program at the elementary level because they are more elementary French immersion principals than junior-senior high school principals. Therefore, they provided easier access to me than secondary level principals. Also, elementary French immersion principals may have experiences that are specific to them because of factors such as the

nature of their students, teachers and parents and the available funding from federal and provincial governments.

The principals had to have little or no knowledge of the French language since it was assumed that they would have to make accommodations for their lack of fluency especially in areas such as instructional leadership.

The principals had to be administering schools in Alberta to provide me with easier access to the respondents.

Limitations

The limitations relate mainly to the researcher and the respondent. Since data were collected through interviews, the study depended upon the ability of the principals to recall their past experiences. Therefore the accuracy of the data was limited by the administrators' ability to remember the actual details of their actions and to what extent they had been relevant at the time of the occurrence. Because of this limitation, there may have been an incongruency between what the principal perceived was done and what was done in reality.

The other limitations are pertinent to the researcher. The lack of experience related to interviewing skills on the part of the researcher could possibly have been a limitation in this study. In order to reduce this limitation, a pilot study was conducted by the interviewer.

Another limitation was the potential inability on the interviewer's part to fully understand what the principals said, thus leading to possible misinterpretations or incomplete data on the principals' work.

Definition of Terms

Anglophone: a person whose dominant language is English and who has little or no knowledge of French

Dual-track schools: schools in which there is offered both the regular English program and the French immersion program

Francophone: a native speaker of French

French immersion centre: a school which houses only French immersion programs

French immersion program: An educational program in which most of the subject matter found in the Program of Studies approved by the Ministry of Education are taught in French to anglophone students

Multicultural centre: a school which houses a regular English program, a French immersion program as well as another second language program.

Target language: French, the second language which the students aim at obtaining.

Outline of Thesis

Chapter One contains the statement of the problem and its significance, assumptions, delimitations and limitations, and definition of terms. Chapter Two details the related literature which forms the basis for the conceptual framework. The methodology used in this study is described in Chapter Three and the findings, both categories and themes form Chapter Four. Chapter Five includes the summary of the findings, reflections and implications for practice and research.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In this chapter, I will detail the related literature which forms the basis for the conceptual framework of the present study. First, a review of the historical context of French immersion programs is presented under the following headings: implications of multicultural education and French immersion and planned change. Second, literature related to the role of French immersion parents is considered with a focus on the nature of French immersion parents, immersion parents' goals, elitism, and social milieu influences. Third, literature on related school factors is elaborated upon under the role of the principal, the French immersion teacher, and curriculum resources. Fourth, student achievement related literature is discussed with an emphasis on early versus middle or late immersion and immersion for all students. Finally, following a summary of the review of related literature, the chapter concludes with a presentation and discussion of the conceptual framework of this study.

Historical Context

Although French immersion programs have existed in Canada since the early sixties starting with the Toronto School and the St. Lambert project, some researchers such as Burns & Olson (1983) lament the lack of long-range planning on the part of administrators of French immersion programs at all levels. Despite this, the implementation of French immersion programs across Canada has had

a serious impact on the existing educational systems throughout the country. Because of these major implications of multicultural education, French immersion is now considered a serious educational innovation requiring sound planning.

Implications of Multicultural Education

Bhola (1988) describes an adequate model of multicultural education as "comprehensive enough to embrace various social contexts and many individuals and institutions in a complex network of vertical and horizontal relationships" (p. 104). She explains that "a model of multicultural education should be able to make connections between policy formulation and pedagogical choices" (p. 104), moving easily from one context to another, be it global, national or local. She believes that the overlapping contexts of the macro-culture, the community context and the school context should together influence the policy and pedagogy of multicultural education. In essence, she maintains that multiculturalism is more than a course of study as it is also a course of action, and that "education should directly influence society" (p. 104). Therefore not only would her model provide clarification of the relationships between policy and pedagogy, but also a consistency between policies and educational goals.

Although the application of this model in practice could greatly facilitate the implementation of a French immersion program, it is not yet a reality. Burns and Olson (1983) actually talk about the implementation of French immersion as a disruption of the educational environment in several ways. They state that "What these ecological and demographic changes mean in practice is a dramatic change in the dynamics of the political economy of schooling" (p. 58).

Burns (1986) agrees with the view of the multi-dimensional effect of French

immersion on a system. He explains that "French immersion is an innovation which has implications for extant programs, services, activities, and resources (both human and material) within school board systems and individual schools" (p. 573). Burns & Olson (1983) suggest that immersion is often resisted because of the "unknown aspects of change" that result from the implementation of the program.

Burns (1987) reiterates this view in another article in which he comments that:

It would be naive to suggest that there will not be difficulties when implementing total system and long range planning involving both core French and French immersion programming. Difficulties, when they occur, will tend to surface in context of differences in the opinions, attitudes, aspirations, and expectations of all those involved. In addition, attempts at long range and total system planning will also be affected by factors such as changes in the nature and scope of FSL funding; declining enrolments; general education policy and funding; social conditions in the school and the community; political expediency in decision making by trustees; and so on. (p. 63)

Other authors, Curtain (1985) and Lemire (1989) also acknowledge the political element that comes into play when the local boards of education, "who, possibly know the least about that program" (Curtain, 1985, p. 45), make decisions related to educational policies. Similarly, according to Rickards (1984):

Although it is a recognized fact that cultural pluralism exists in United States society, major decisions in industry and government are made by Anglo-Americans who very often are not knowledgeable about or tolerant of ethnic, cultural, and racial differences within the United States. (p. 3)

Despite these realities, Burns and Olson (1983) contend that "parents and teachers should be able to rely on boards being actively involved in planning with continuity along the educational continuum in mind" (p. 178).

French Immersion and Planned Change

Burns (1986) affirms that "Because immersion is such a complex innovation, immersion thinkers are beginning to acknowledge that it is an innovation where implementation is worthy of study in its own right" (p. 575).

As it stands now, "immersion is all too frequently played by ear" (Burns, 1986, p. 587). Burns and Olson (1983) found that "the entire process is rather ad hoc" (p. 179) and that "numerous dual-track programs are more a product of happenstance than design" (p. 173). In fact, immersion programs are adopted by school boards in reaction to strong political lobbies by parents. Burns (1986) found that these boards are rarely committed to the implementation of immersion and therefore play a reactive rather than a pro-active role in regard to initial adoption and ongoing expansion of immersion throughout a system. Data suggest that in fact several boards will try to delay adoption and/or expansion as much as possible. Needless to say, this ad hoc "approach raises the ire of teachers, principals and parents alike; causes hostility within the community, and encourages school based personnel to become experts in the science of impression management" (Burns & Olson, 1983, p. 179).

Because planners of French immersion programs lack an understanding of the problems of immersion and of the way in which adoption and implementation can be ameliorated, the usual implementation of an immersion program is not a very smooth process. This is why several authors have recently called for immersion to be seen as a complex educational innovation which should result from sound planning (Bhola, 1987; Burns, 1986; Burns & Olson, 1983; Helle, 1985; Hollerback, 1985; Parkin et al., 1987). For example, Helle (1985)

contends that "Planning for the introduction of an immersion program is seen as an important activity for educational, organizational, and budget purposes. ... As a general rule, one year's planning time is recommended before the implementation of an immersion program" (p. 117). Hollerback (1985) goes as far as warning the school boards by saying:

don't embark on an ambitious elementary program unless you are also committed to guarantee, within reasonable limits, continuity beyond elementary school and to upgrade the foreign language programs at the junior and senior high school levels. (p. 17)

Burns and Olson (1983) believe that "A systematic approach to these programs would alleviate many of the difficulties experienced by parents and teachers alike" (p. 177).

Burns (1986) attributes problems of immersion to the fact that it is too often implemented as a product rather than a process and without taking into consideration its multi-dimensional aspects or its effects on the school system.

He states that:

According to the literature any attempt to implement educational innovations requires an organized set of principles that explicitly takes into account the essential attributes of the immersion innovation (potentially involving socio-linguistics, methodologies, an instructional technology, beliefs, materials, attitudes, value commitments, and so on); the complexity of a school system including its social psychological and sociological aspects; and the usual ways of functioning in education and society. (p. 577)

In sum, authors of the related literature on the historical context of French immersion point out that because planners of French immersion lack an understanding of problems of immersion and of the way in which adoption and implementation can be improved, French immersion programs are seen as a disruption of the educational environment in several ways. Hence they are

associated with causing a dramatic change in the dynamics of the political economy of schooling. In turn, these unknown causes of change contribute to resistance to the program by various members of the French immersion community. Therefore these authors recommend that the implementation of French immersion be viewed as a serious and complex educational innovation worthy of study as well as a process requiring sound planning.

The Role of French Immersion Parents

The role of French immersion parents in the Canadian educational system is not to be underestimated. French immersion in this country has been established mostly at the Anglophone parents' initiative because of their determination and lobbies. Since then, these parents have not relented in their efforts as they are continuing to play an active role in their children's education. Therefore it is of outmost importance that the nature, goals and influences of French immersion parents be understood. At the same time, the notion of "elitism" has to be clarified before one can give credence to it.

The Nature of French Immersion Parents

Helle (1985) infers that immersion parents are actively interested in their children's education because they are responsible for the spread of immersion programs across Canada and because they have been involved in program initiation and implementation. This notion of commitment to education by immersion parents is attributed to the fact that "they have made a conscious choice to put their children in the immersion program" (Lemire, 1989, p. 36). In his study, two-thirds of the respondents indicated that parental involvement was very high in their schools. In fact many respondents in Tétrault (1984)'s study said that

"parents required a strong commitment to the French program in order to encourage and keep their child in the program" (p. 52).

Burns and Olson (1983) describe immersion parents in Northern Ontario as "an impressive group" (p. 34). Not only are they active in monitoring their children's progress, but "they are quite active in monitoring teacher activity" (Burns & Olson, 1983, p. 34). Tétrault (1984) reports that several principals who participated in his study saw increased political action by immersion parents. They described them as being well educated and from the upper-middle class. Principals saw them as having "substantial political power and took a more active role in school-community relations" (p. 72).

On the other hand, Lemire (1989) found that:

there is a lack of commitment on the part of the principals in recognizing that parents can play an important supportive role for the French immersion program. It should not be understated that open lines of communication with parents and the community are essential to foster a cooperative spirit in supporting the program's visions. Principals would do well to consider allaying themselves much more closely with parent committees and meeting more regularly with and involving parents more directly in their child's French immersion program. (p. 93)

Immersion Parents' Goals

Frenette (1988) explains that one can have a dual purpose for wanting a child to learn the language of the minority, i.e., French in Alberta.

On peut avoir des attitudes à la fois utilitaires et intégrationnelles envers la langue de la minorité; on peut considérer le français comme un bien utile qui assure la promotion sociale, et comme un bien collectif, qui assure en quelque sorte les liens d'affectivité qui relient un groupe. (p. 18)

(Translation: One can have both practical and integrational attitudes towards the minority language; one can consider French as a useful good which ensures social promotion, and as a collective good, which in some way ensures the affective links that brings a group together.)

It seems that the reasons why parents enlist their children in immersion programs are mixed.

it appears that parents have a range of different goals. The two prevalent ones, however, seem to be to provide economic and job opportunities for their children and to give them greater cultural enrichment opportunities. (Burns & Olson, 1983, p. 15)

Carey (1984) found "an enriched and diversified educational experience" (p. 247) as a third reason why parents put their children in immersion. Helle (1985) also claims that "the question was not only political or ideological, it was also economic" (p. 106). This view was confirmed in Lemire's study (1989) wherein "three-quarters of the principals feel that parents are selecting French immersion for their children because they foresee better opportunities and a greater variety of jobs in the future" (p. 90). Interestingly enough, Rickards (1984) found in a study done in the United States that "The most prevalent reason for parents to want foreign language instruction for their children was for social exchange and/or communicating with others" (p. 71) and that "Educational or economic status of the respondents did not significantly influence this viewpoint" (p. 71).

Elitism

Martel (1984) states that:

Both the ethnic survival and the immersion are an alternative within public education and offer more than the regular education program. This effort has led to accusations of elitism. In fact, elitism has been the most constant criticism levelled at immersion programs by the public and at times by research. (p. 117)

When looking at the literature research, it is very difficult to confirm or deny the accusations of elitism as findings related to the matter are quite contradictory. For example, Parkin et al. (1987) maintain that:

Policies regarding admission also vary greatly from one system to

another: one system accepts all whose parents want them to enrol, while in another only those identified as being in the top half of their class would be accepted. (p. 66)

To the contrary, Helle (1985) claims that "subsequently even these programs have been opened to all pupils. As a rule, the programs are available to all children, and there is no screening of the pupils on the basis of IQ or other variables" (p. 136). As Bienvenue (1986) states, despite these issues the idea of "segregated" classes (or schools), the real or potential development of elitism, and the persistence of community conflict, there is "little empirical information that could establish the importance of these variables for the recruitment process into French immersion programs" (p. 807).

Nevertheless, there appears to be agreement about the background of the immersion student as well as the immersion parent. Several authors suggest that the socio-economic background of the immersion children and their parents is of the middle and upper middle class and that both parent and child seem to be above average in intelligence. (Burns, 1986; Burns & Olson, 1983; Carey, 1984; Helle, 1985; Parkin and Others, 1987; Tétrault, 1984). In addition, Tétrault found that not only are immersion students from "a strong academically motivated family background" (p. 38), their parents differ from non-immersion parents in terms of fluency in French, attitude towards learning French, confidence in their children's academic ability, and time spent reading to their children. Colletta et al. (1983) also found that "the middle and upper-middle SES parents devote more of their time and energy to their children's French language study than do higher SES parents" (p. 88).

Some authors attribute the notion of "elitism" in part to the self-selection

process i.e., "the best pupils choose the immersion option" (Helle, 1985; Burns & Olson, 1983; Carey, 1984). However, Burns (1986) does not agree with this view.

He states that:

Of particular interest in the findings is the discovery that all too frequently social inequality in immersion is dismissed as being a result of a self selection process. This is a simplistic approach to the problem. It is clear that where inequality exists in immersion, educational policies and practices play a major role in the condition. (p. 589)

Burns and Olson (1983) indicate that in addition to self-selection or "initial parental choice" (p. 55), program exclusion is also the cause of "elitism" in French immersion programs. They identified various forms of program exclusion practices in Northern Ontario schools. First, the passive way in which the program was advertised affected the recruitment of students since it left "the information about program opportunities to individual judgement" (p. 33). Burns and Olson (1983) pointed out that:

The cumulative impact of this passive recruitment is to segregate children in terms of social class, learning opportunities, cultural opportunities, job possibilities, and access to peers. This de facto stratification influences levels of parent involvement in schools and also influences the quality and kind of classmates a student has in each group. (p. 33)

Secondly, it was found that immersion teachers were able to pick and choose their students and to make more demands on parents to assist their children. These demands would not normally be made in regular English classes. Thirdly, Burns and Olson observed that students who were termed as "learning disadvantaged" or "problem" children were recommended to be transferred to regular English classes by teachers or administrators, leaving therefore the better achievers in French immersion.

In the case described by Burns and Olson (1983), it is true that "not all children had equal or even real access" (p. 48) to French immersion programs. Burns (1986) attributes this "built-in social inequality" (p. 589) (though not necessarily intentional) to ineffective implementation. This unintended "elitism" can however be reduced by reassuring the public that "the program ought to be accessible to students of low as well as average and high ability" (Jones, 1984, p. 263). Despite this reassurance, there are some like Martel (1984) who believe that the very existence of the program itself promotes elitism. She states that "These programs give an advantage to majority children allowing them to move into the upper echelons of the majority in the job competition of a bilingual country, in effect to become a minority, an élite" (p. 118).

Social Milieu Influences

Based on findings from previous research literature, Rosenbusch (1987), Carey (1984) and Colletta et al. (1987) believe that the student's positive attitude towards the target language and those who speak it are significantly related to success in learning the language. In addition, they contend that parents play a major role in shaping their children's attitudes and that their own attitudes towards the target language and those who speak it affect their children's success in attaining knowledge of the language. Frenette (1988) supports this view as he comments that:

le chercheur de noter que les jeunes anglophones qui possédaient une attitude intégrationnelle envers le français finissaient par mieux apprendre le français que ceux qui n'avaient qu'une attitude instrumentale. (p. 18)

(Translation: The researcher noted that young anglophones who possessed an integrational attitude towards French ended up learning French better than those who only had an instrumental purpose [for

learning the minority language])).

However, Singh (1986) found another author, Savignon, who opposes this view since [he] "shows that there is no substantial correlation between favourable attitudes and success in French, and that, in fact, it is success in French that influences attitudes toward French study and French rather than vice versa" (p. 562). Rosenbusch (1987) and Colletta et al. (1983) talk about parental influences in terms of being passive and/or active. Passive influences stem from the parents' attitudes and active influences result from direct encouragement and involvement in the children's education. It is the active influences of parents that affect their children's success in second language acquisition in a positive way. Colletta et al. (1983) who tested Gardner's model of parental influences (1968) on students' second language acquisition conclude that "the role of parental influence on second language acquisition needs further examination" (p. 97) since they found that "the more actively involved the parent is in the child's second language training, the less favourable the student attitudes are" (p. 90) possibly because of the pressure exerted by parents who are more actively involved in their children's second language education.

In their study (1983), Colletta et al. found that socio-economic status (SES) was indeed a significant variable in the acquisition process of the immersion child. It was found that the lower the SES level of the immediate neighbourhood, the more active the parents were. Also, SES may influence language acquisition to the extent that parents can provide opportunities for their children.

They also found that social factors such as the linguistic character of the language student's community influences the child in second language acquisition.

This finding is confirmed by Politzer (1981) who states that:

The overall impression left by a great deal of educational data and research concerning bilingualism and school achievement is that one of the main determinants of achievement is, in fact, social class.
(p. 1)

Burns and Olson (1983) felt that they could safely "assume that the parents of students in French immersion, who belong largely to the upper socio-economic segments of their community play the most important role in their children's academic attainment" (p.30).

Colletta et al. (1983) also found that students with high self-confidence with French whose parents are involved with their second language education are more likely to develop positive attitudes.

Although she could not substantiate it with empirical evidence, Gibson (1985) feels that "parental nervousness and uncertainty about immersion are among the most common causes of drop-outs or "pull-outs" from the program" (p. 14). Lemire's (1989) findings confirm Gibson's feeling. He indicated that:

half the principals also referred to the program as being stylish, trendy, prestigious, elitist, the "in thing", "keeping up with the Joneses". "As a result, there isn't a tremendous amount of commitment or support from these parents and their kids aren't doing that well," said one administrator. (p. 91)

In conclusion, the role of French immersion parents in the Canadian educational system should not be underestimated. Not only are they responsible for spreading French immersion programs across Canada but some researchers contend that parents play a major role in shaping their children's attitudes and that

their own attitudes towards the target language and those who speak it affect their children's success in attaining knowledge of the language. However, other researchers who deny the correlation between favourable attitudes and success in French believe that it is in fact the active influences of parents that affect their children's success in second language acquisition in a positive way. Despite these opposing findings, both views acknowledge the important roles of French immersion parents in the children's academic career. It was found that immersion parents are indeed strongly committed to the program and are active not only in monitoring their children's progress but also in monitoring teacher activity. Parents hold mixed reasons for enrolling their children in immersion. They are mainly to provide their children with increased economic and job opportunities, a greater cultural enrichment and, an enriched and diversified educational experience. When looking at the literature research, it is difficult to confirm or deny accusations of "elitism" as findings related to the matter are quite contradictory. Nevertheless, there is some agreement about the characteristics of the background of both the immersion child and parent. First, they generally are from a high socio-economic middle and upper class and are above average in intelligence. Second, they usually come from a strong academically motivated background. Immersion parents differed from non-immersion parents in their fluency in French, their attitude towards second language learning, their confidence in their children's academic abilities and in the time spent in reading to their children.

School Factors

Frenette (1988) believes that "l'éthique de l'école, ce que certains appellent l'"éthos" de l'école, doit stimuler des attitudes intégrationnelles envers le français"

(p. 19). (The ethos of the school must stimulate integrative attitudes towards the French language). Despite the need to recognize that helpful though parental involvement is, the crux of the success of the immersion programs lie in issues related to the role of the principal and the availability of both human and physical resources. Together, they form the basic core which ensures the successful outcome of French immersion programs.

The Role of the Principal

The role of the principal is manifold in a French immersion program. Discussions herein will be restricted to notions such as instructional leadership and communication although the understanding of psychological factors in second language education and the understanding of language and cultural differences are related to the role of the principal as well, though to a lesser degree.

Instructional Leadership at the School Level

Batsis (1987) indicates that "even though instructional leadership has received most attention in education literature, some theorists dispute this emphasis, concluding that school management functions are best left to principals and instructional leadership to teachers" (ED 285 265). He identifies a set of five characteristics common to effective school administrators:

- 1) a sense of vision,
- 2) a comprehensive perspective transcending goals and mission,
- 3) clearly stated expectations for staff and students,
- 4) effective formal and informal communication skills,
- 5) a high degree of presence or visibility and technical knowledge of curricula and learning processes.

Batsis (1987) contends that "the most effective leaders enter situations without preconceived notions and adapt their leadership approaches accordingly" (ED 285 265). Other studies show however that the role of the principal as instructional leader has a significant impact upon the effectiveness of the school. Cawelti (1982) indicates that "the instructional leadership component is essential if we are to help increase the productivity of principals in school improvement" (p. 327). He contends that the major instructional improvement processes used in schools to help teachers are curriculum development, clinical supervision, staff development and teacher evaluation. The importance of the administrator in instructional matters is reiterated by Wood, McQuarie and Thompson (1982) who state that "the principal is the key element for adoption and continued use of new practices and programs in a school" (p. 29).

Weber (1987) believes that "Instructional Leadership is long-term dedication to instructional excellence that includes both instructional and school management issues" (ED 288 261). A combination of personal traits and of principals' strong belief in their schools and management strategies used to oversee and to guide instruction can make a significant difference in their school's instructional programs. He believes in shared leadership for better instruction and student outcomes.

According to Purcell (1987), research indicates that one critical factor in successful and continuous staff development is consistently strong leadership and support. His paper emphasizes the importance of the principal's support for staff development as a change strategy. Furthermore, "principals who understand and participate in staff development activities gain credibility and visibility with both

parents and staff" (ED 285 279). He goes so far as to say that to be educational leaders, principals must understand teaching methods as well as subject matter taught. According to Purcell (1987) the principal is at the head of the staff professional development since he/she is the one who controls both internal and external resources available to the school whether they are material or human. The principal also evaluates each teacher's performance and sets norms of collegiality.

Instructional Leadership in Second Language Programs

Batsis (1987) focuses on effective leaders in language minority schools in another paper which is based on two assumptions. Firstly, principals in these schools need additional knowledge and skills and secondly, these schools differ significantly from regular schools. Good principals in minority language schools shared at least five common characteristics:

- (1) a conflict or crises brought them to their present position,
- (2) high levels of job satisfaction,
- (3) high involvement and familiarity with classroom occurrences,
- (4) a strong mission and commitment to bilingual education,
- (5) an understanding of the complex issues involved.

Lemire (1989) reports "that the successful implementation of an immersion program depends largely on the commitment of the school board personnel, and to a greater extent, on the initiative of the principal" (p. 3). Rhodes (1983) supports this view by proposing that "How the elementary school principal perceives and responds to this predicament is critical. No early-language effort can survive in a school without firm administrative support" (p. 28). Crandall et al. (1987) also state

that "support from the administration is crucial at all stages of the process" (p. 9).

Many principals in Tétrault's (1984) study themselves stated "that without a very strong, positive attitude towards French demonstrated by the principal, the immersion program was not likely to succeed." However, Tétrault (1984) also "noted that in several instances, principals had been placed in charge of an immersion program without having had an opportunity to become knowledgeable about or committed to the immersion program." Lemire (1989) and Jones (1984) maintain that along with support is the need for the principal to acquire an understanding and a knowledge base of the objectives, strategies and outcomes of the immersion program: "That kind of support from the school administrator is still vital but in addition there exists a need for administrators to be leaders in curriculum and instruction and to be able to evaluate programs and teachers" (Jones, 1984, p. 264). Lemire (1989) goes so far as to say that "This is particularly true in the case of non-French-speaking principals who are not familiar with the language, and to some degree, the French culture their program is attempting to transmit" (3). He argues because recent research on the principalship and school effectiveness emphasizes "the primordial role of the principal in providing educational leadership, ' . . . it would appear to be consistent and logical that districts should appoint bilingual principals to administer bilingual programs in order to ensure their success" (43). He maintains that the principal who has a knowledge of the target language will be better able to

foster school atmosphere; model the language for the students; provide for the instructional leadership of teachers; create an effective general administration of communication; facilitate supervision and evaluation of personnel and the development, implementation and evaluation of programs; enhance the ability to relate to native French speakers on staff or in classrooms; add credibility with staff and

public. (p. 44)

Despite the urgency of certain researchers pressing for principals of French immersion programs to become leaders of instruction, Burns and Olson (1983) found:

that in general, persons in positions of responsibility are not enacting meaningful leadership roles in the implementation of French second language extended and immersion programs. By their own admission principals are only marginally involved in the ongoing development and implementation of immersion programs. During interviews, the majority of principals indicated that they played a supportive role rather than a leadership role with FSL extended and immersion teachers. (p. 118)

For example, Moquin and Starésina (1987) state that "les directeurs et les évaluateurs qui évaluent les programmes d'immersion, bilingues et d'enseignement de langue seconde sans avoir une assez bonne connaissance de la langue cible, se retrouvent devant une tâche quasi - insurmontable" (p. 18). (Principals and supervisors who evaluate immersion, bilingual and second language programs, without mastering the target language, face an almost insurmountable task.) They strongly believe that "la présence de personnes parlant suffisamment bien la langue est obligatoire pour toute évaluation" (p. 19). (The presence of people mastering the target language is compulsory in any evaluation.) They suggest bringing in experts from neighbouring school districts or from the Department of Education to help the principals evaluate their French immersion teachers.

The reason why principals are limited to playing a supportive role rather than a leadership role is manifold. First most immersion principals do not receive specialized training (Burns & Olson, 1983; Tétrault, 1984; Lemire, 1989). Secondly, principals are not involved in in-service related to the implementation process and

its problems. Thirdly, because principals do not know the French language, they have difficulty in providing leadership regarding specific components of the program. All these factors together have resulted in the immersion teachers having to cope on their own when it comes to curricula.

Despite this, Slogar and Dergousoff (1988) maintain that "it is possible to be effective as a unilingual principal in a bilingual school" (p. 16), although initially as unilingual principals, they thought that special training in, or a command of, the French language was essential. They indicate that "At first, unilingual administrators feel inadequate and overwhelmed" and that "stress - for parents, students, teachers and administrators - is greater in French immersion than in the regular program" (p. 16).

There are others however who do not share this view. Lemire (1989) states that:

Whether or not the principal or vice-principal of a French immersion program school should be proficient in French tends to remain a divisive issue, however, the results of this study seem to support the increasing trend to hiring bilingual administrators for immersion programs. (p. 43)

This view is supported by Jones (1984) who sees French proficiency as a requirement for school level administrators in the future. He does however, caution us by alluding to "the story of the bilingual lifeguard who could not swim but was given the job because of his language skills" (p. 264).

Communication

Because the implementation of immersion programs does affect the educational environment, Burns (1987) states that:

it will be most important during the whole change process to communicate often and well, both to the public and to teacher groups

regarding what changes will occur, when and how they will be implemented, and to what ends changes are directed. (p. 63)

Communication will help put a stop to misconceptions of parents and teachers "(where they exist) [that] may be contributing toward divisiveness in the system" (Burns, 1987, p. 62). Burns and Olson (1983) believe it to be "critically important that school based personnel develop mechanisms to ensure public awareness of French second language extended immersion education" (p.160). For example, Rickards (1984), reported that "More than half of the parents (68.6%) were unaware of the language immersion program, although they (82.2%) still preferred neighbourhood schools for foreign language study for their children" (Ed 245 532). These findings resulted from a study done in the San Diego area in the United States.

Often the responsibility of informing parents and the public at large falls upon the shoulders of the principal whose role becomes that of a promoter who needs to "sell" the immersion program in an ever-increasing competitive market. (Lemire, 1989; Tétrault, 1984). Tétrault (1984) reported that "Public relations was seen to be [by immersion principals] much more important, for in many instances parents would not place their children in the program if the principal was unable to convince them of the program's validity" (p. 49).

Therefore information giving and increased public relations require that the principal not only be knowledgeable about the immersion program, but also be positive about it! Tétrault (1984) also found that public relations were very time-consuming for the principal. This finding is confirmed in Lemire's study (1989) in which he explains that:

The majority of principals reported that one of the primary reasons

for the extra workload could be directly attributed to the need for educating, counselling, hand-holding and meeting with parents who continually require reassurance. French immersion parents are thought to be much more demanding, concerned, committed, involved, visible and "want a lot of answers". (p. 35)

He added that much time is required for the interaction with parents. Some principals interviewed by Lemire (1989) found it to be very important to "communicate honestly and openly with parents and to help them understand the reality of the immersion program" (p. 42). Curtain (1985) also saw the "total foreign language staff" (p. 47) as responsible for convincing individuals and parents about the value of the multicultural program. She explained her view in the following way:

If they do not have a commitment to the need of foreign language study as an integral part of a basic education when they enter the school scene; then it is the task of the foreign language department to open this vista to them. The total foreign language staff must also be prepared to present the record of achievement of the district foreign language program to individuals and groups of parents; but rationale needs the support of deeds. (p. 47)

Jones (1984) supports the need for "talking to parents of children in the program" (p. 267) as well. He however cautions us to balance publicity and public relations so that publicity will not adversely affect public relations. He states that "In effecting good public relations it is necessary to remind parents that immersion is a program of choice and that excellent all-English programs are available to them if that is their choice" (p. 267).

In sum, notions such as instructional leadership and communication are quite significant when discussing the role of the French immersion principal. Several studies show that the role of the principal as an instructional leader has a significant impact upon the effectiveness of a school. This is particularly true for the major instructional processes used in schools to help teachers, mainly

curriculum development, clinical supervision, staff development and teacher evaluation. However related literature indicates that principals play a supportive rather than a leadership role vis-à-vis their French immersion teachers. Reasons for this are varied. First, principals receive no specialized training to deal with French immersion programs. Second, they are not involved in in-services related to the implementation process and its problems and third, they have no knowledge of the French language. Research literature also indicates that because the implementation of immersion programs does affect the educational environment, it is critical for the principal to communicate often and well to help put a stop to misconceptions of parents and teachers alike. In addition, it was found that the responsibility of informing parents and the public at large falls upon the shoulders of the principal whose role becomes that of a promoter who needs to "sell" the immersion program in an ever-increasing competitive market.

The French Immersion Teacher

Several authors contend that the key to a successful French immersion program is the teacher (Jones, 1979; Helle, 1985; Hollerbach, 1985; Tétrault, 1984). Researchers report that school boards have difficulty in hiring "qualified" teachers to fill immersion teaching positions (Annandale, 1985; Curtain & Rhodes, 1985; Helle, 1985; Lemire, 1989; Tardif and Weber, 1987). As Rhodes (1983) states: "Immersion, for example, ideally requires teachers fluent in a foreign language who have elementary school certification" (p.28). Singh (1986) affirms that:

Whether most teaching-personnel profiles look the way they do because of a consistent hiring policy of the local school boards or because local native-speakers and second language, dominant bilinguals are not available to fill every teaching-spot, can have

important consequences. (p. 565)

Language Proficiency

The French immersion teacher is usually the only French speaking model for immersion students. (Helle, 1985; Parkin & Others, 1987; Tardif, 1984; Tardif and Weber, 1987). As Tardif (1984) indicates:

En Alberta ou le français n'est pas normalement la langue du milieu social du jeune, ce rôle prend encore plus d'ampleur. L'enseignant est parfois le seul modèle langagier de la langue seconde auquel le jeune sera exposé. (p. 371)

(Translation: In Alberta where French is not normally the language of the youngster's social milieu, this role takes on greater importance. The teacher is sometimes the only language model of the second language to which the youngster will be exposed).

As Tardif and Weber (1987) state, "Teachers make use of many second language teaching strategies (e.g. modelling, echoing, extending, prompting, questioning, directing actions, making requests, varying intonation patterns" (p. 73). Annandale (1985) warns us of the danger of hiring a teacher whose French language proficiency is weak when she comments that:

The teacher who is tongue-tied or forced to break into English when annoyed or pleased will, in the long run, risk communicating what students may, depending on their age, already suspect: that only English is real, that only English is appropriate for spontaneous and genuine communication, and that French is basically a textbook writer's invention. (p. 915)

Pedagogical Skills

Obadia (1984) found that more than French language proficiency is required from the French immersion teacher. He elaborated on this point by saying:

Si on accepte notre définition que "l'immersion à l'école est un moyen d'EDUQUER un enfant principalement dans une langue autre que sa langue maternelle", il est évident que ce n'est plus une classe habituelle de "langue étrangère" mais bien plutôt un mode

d'éducation qui englobe le développement physique, cognitif et affectif de l'enfant. C'est donc d'un éducateur complet qu'il s'agit, d'un pédagogue qui a subi une formation générale et spécialisée et non d'un simple professeur de langue. (p. 379)

(Translation: If one accepts the definition which states that "immersion at school is a way to EDUCATE a child mainly in a language other than his mother tongue", it is obvious that it is no longer a regular "second language" class but rather a mode of education which encompasses the physical, cognitive and affective development of the child. Therefore, a complete educator is needed, a pedagogue who has undergone general and specialized training, not simply a second language teacher).

Tardif (1984) supports this view by stating that:

L'enseignant qui enseigne en situation d'immersion doit non seulement être capable de transmettre les concepts de base des études sociales, des mathématiques, des sciences, mais il doit aussi bien connaître les étapes dans l'acquisition d'une deuxième langue pour savoir adapter son langage au niveau de l'élève. L'enseignant devra utiliser une méthodologie qui s'adapte au contexte en immersion. Ce double rôle de l'enseignant en immersion exige que nos futurs enseignants aient une vision globale de l'éducation du jeune. Tant au niveau secondaire qu'au niveau élémentaire, l'enseignant doit intégrer les connaissances de la matière aux connaissances de la langue. Ces deux éléments sont interdépendants. (p. 366)

(Translation: The immersion teacher must be able to transmit the basic concepts of social studies, mathematics and science, but he/she should also be very knowledgeable of the second language steps to know how to adapt his/her language to suit the student's level. The teacher will need to use a methodology which will adapt itself to the immersion context. This double role of the immersion teacher requires that our future teachers have a global vision of youth education. The teacher must integrate subject matter and language objectives at both the elementary and Junior/Senior High levels.)

Helle (1985) states that "In general, specialized training in second-language teaching has not been considered necessary or even desirable" (p. 138). Because of this, one has to recognize:

The failure of teachers and curriculum writers to distinguish between

the development of conversational or surface fluency in a second language and the cognitive/academic aspects of second language proficiency has resulted in low academic performance for some children, (Fallon, 1986, p. 9)

since teachers do not spend time promoting higher levels of thinking when teaching various subject matters to French immersion students. Crandall et al. (1987) agree that developing interpersonal communicative skills is not enough. They comment that: "We also need to provide students with meaningful, relevant content - area instruction and contexts upon which to base their language skills" (p. 3). Thus, several authors acknowledge the need of French immersion teachers to know how to integrate second language acquisition with curricula content (Parkin et al. 1987; Mahé, 1986; Hollerbach, 1985; Jones, 1984). This requirement suggests that French immersion teachers must be very creative and autonomous since they constantly have to find new and interesting ways to integrate second language learning with curriculum content (Lemire, 1989; Tardif, 1984).

Interpersonal Skills

Some authors, (Lemire, 1989; Tétrault, 1984; Tardif, 1984; Curtain, 1985), found that French immersion teachers had to possess good interpersonal skills because they had to deal with extensive parental involvement with, "selling" the program and with the feelings of Anglophone teachers towards the French immersion program. Tétrault (1984) explains that:

the immersion teacher had to have more public relation skills because of increased parental involvement and the inherent need of selling the program to the public; the immersion teacher had to take on many administrative roles in cases where the school administration did not speak French; and finally, the immersion teacher had to be much more of a curriculum designer because of the lack of developed French immersion materials and curriculum. (p. 51)

English Proficiency Skills

A number of researchers (Lemire, 1989; Tardif, 1984; Jones, 1984; Helle, 1985) suggest that French immersion teachers with English competency would be beneficial to the program in that they could better communicate with Anglophone parents, colleagues, and administrators and because they must be able to analyze linguistic errors made by their students.

When considering the requirements of French immersion teachers in terms of dual language proficiency and pedagogical skills, it is no small wonder that principals indicated that the immersion teacher had a heavier workload (Lemire, 1989).

In conclusion, several authors contend that the key to a successful French immersion program is the teacher. However, school boards are experiencing difficulty in hiring "qualified" teachers to fill immersion positions, i.e., teachers that are both fluent in the second language and who possess good pedagogical skills. Because teachers are having to deal with extensive parental involvement, with "selling" the program and with the feelings of Anglophone teachers towards the French immersion program, some authors recommend that immersion teachers should also demonstrate good interpersonal skills and English proficiency skills.

Curriculum Resources

Several researchers have found that the attainment of resource materials was very challenging. (Tétrault, 1984; Helle, 1985; Curtain and Rhodes, 1985; Burns, 1986; Rhodes, 1983; Jones, 1984; Burns and Olson, 1983). Jones (1984) comments that "courseware suitable for immersion needs to be developed. Having the hardware without the courseware is like having a car but not the gas to run it"

(p.262). Rhodes (1983) maintains that:

There is an ongoing critical need of teaching materials for immersion programs. The materials must use the foreign language as a medium for teaching the regular elementary school curriculum. Currently, a number of schools are developing their own materials, supplemented by books from other countries. Immersion teachers have found that foreign materials require considerable adapting. (p. 28)

Although Jones (1984) indicated that "In the past there was a need for practically everything because virtually all commercial texts had been produced with native francophones in mind and very little local development was occurring" (p. 262), Burns and Olson also found that "The issue also surfaced in the informal comments made to us by immersion teachers about the type of textbooks they were required to use. Several complained that they were Québec-based in content and orientation" (pp. 38-39). Because of this lack of availability of adequate resource materials for French immersion programs, teachers have to spend more time creating materials and/or adapting them to suit the content and the level of the Anglophone student in French immersion (Tétrault, 1984; Parkin et al., 1987; Helle, 1985; Hollerbach, 1985; Crandall et al., 1987). Jones (1984) is of the opinion that "The future will see a continuing need for commercial print and non-print resource materials appropriate for immersion as well as materials for enrichment to attempt to meet the needs of the gifted and talented in the program" (p. 262). Tétrault (1984) found that in addition to the scarcity of appropriate resource materials, funding was also inadequate for them.

Other Resource Issues

In addition to the problem of availability of French immersion materials, Helle (1985) and Burns and Olson (1983) found that library resources are another

source of concern.

Burns and Olson (1983) suggest that "there is some dissatisfaction among immersion teachers regarding materials and testing student performance" (p. 137).

Parkin and Others (1987) agrees that:

More emphasis should be placed on test development, not only to provide better instruments than are now available for use in research studies and for program evaluation, but also to provide means for helping teachers improve instruction. (p. 77)

Many researchers found that the issue of curriculum development needed to be addressed more readily (Parkin & Others, 1987; Tétrault, 1984; Stern, 1984).

Stern (1984) proposes that:

we should give much more attention to an underlying curriculum philosophy and curriculum development, and in research carry out more classroom observation and specific studies which through carefully designed experiments. (p. 522)

Singh (1986) believes that the reason for this is the following:

to find out about the general linguistic nature of the instructional material utilized in an immersion program and partly to determine the relative suitability of different subject matters as vehicles for increasing competence in the target language. (p. 565)

In summary, researchers indicate several concerns related to curriculum resources. First, they found that the attainment of resource materials was very challenging. Second, there was also a problem of availability of library resources. Third, more attention should be directed towards diagnostic tests and materials. Fourth, it was found that the issue of curriculum development needs to be addressed more readily.

Student Achievement

Together school and parents influence student achievement. In general, French immersion has produced satisfactory results. However it is important for administrators, teachers, and researchers alike to keep working at improving the program as it is still vulnerable to criticism.

Early Versus Middle or Late Immersion

As Politzer (1981) points out, "The main goal of bilingual education is to avoid interference and damage in concept formation and academic development while English is being acquired" (p. 9). Helle (1985) reports that "Generally, both early and late immersion programs have produced good results, while the partial immersion experience has not been as successful" (p. 136). It was found that students "will speak French with ease after spending a year in the French immersion program, and that they will achieve as well, if not better, in all school subjects as those students in the English program" (including English language arts) (Mahé, 1986, p. 205).

Although researchers still maintain the above, further developments have been found in relation to students' second language growth in immersion settings. For example, Clement, Edwards, Krashen, Kruidenier and Wesche (1984) state that "Notwithstanding the obvious success of the immersion approach, some concern has been expressed that many immersion graduates have fossilized elements in their speech and are limited to a classroom register" (p. 270). The findings of Parkin et al. (1987) findings support this statement as they indicated that:

early French immersion students' proficiency in speaking is relatively low in comparison with their ability to understand French and to read it. In particular, the limitations of the classroom environment do not allow the students to perform like native speakers of the language in

social situations. (p. 73)

Therefore, there are advantages to early immersion (as opposed to middle or late immersion) as far as fluency and use of the verb system go, but there is no advantage in the sociolinguistic domain. Harley et al. (1987) and Stern (1984) attributes this reality to "the ceiling effect" (p. 514) affecting immersion students. The "ceiling effect" is when students reach a plateau after a period of steady progress in second language proficiency. Stern (1984) maintains that although early immersion students' reading and listening comprehension reaches near-native standards,

They also acquire a certain fluency in talking which is generally lacking in traditional language learners. but their grammatical accuracy remains somewhat inadequate, and they seem to lack the social and stylistic sense of appropriateness of language use which the native speaker possesses intuitively. (p. 514)

Cummins as in Hakuta and Gould (1987) found that it may take five to seven years for students to acquire the "decontextualized" language skills necessary to function successfully in a second language classroom.

Contrary to these findings, students in middle or late immersion programs are successful not at reaching native French proficiency "but rather the attainment of 'high' proficiency level, good academic progress while being taught in the language of immersion and, above all, the ability to transfer skills in writing and reading achieved in the second language (French) to the first language (English)" (Politzer, 1981, p. 9).

Immersion for All Students

Hollerbach (1985) indicates that "Most analysts however seem to agree that all students can benefit from the language experience" (p. 14). Cummins (1983)

notes that:

It was also initially assumed by many administrators, teachers, and parents that immersion was suitable only for 'brighter' students and that children who were potential academic problems should be screened out of the program. This tendency to view immersion as 'too challenging' for certain categories of student is still widespread despite the fact that research has failed to identify any category of students who would experience differential learning problems in immersion as opposed to English programs. (p. 134)

There is evidence to show that children of below average intelligence, lower than average academic ability or even with some degree of language impairment can be successful in French immersion programs as in the usual English program (Helle, 1985; Parkin et al; 1987). Cummins (1983) and Parkin et al. (1987) report that students with learning disabilities do appear to have some difficulties in processing language in context-reduced situations but their second language proficiency skills are indistinguishable from their English counterparts. Cummins (1983) suggests that "academic proficiencies (and difficulties) are cross-lingual, i.e., similar in nature whether they occur in an immersion or regular English program" (p. 130). Therefore he recommends that students with learning disabilities stay in the program and receive appropriate remedial assistance.

Despite the above studies that indicate that basically any student can do well in immersion, Carey (1984) points out that:

No study to date has demonstrated that bilingualism produces cognitive advantages that cannot be questioned on grounds of student selection, parental and teacher attitudes, or other obvious socio-cultural inequalities between the comparison groups. (p. 253)

In general, both early and late French immersion programs have produced satisfactory results; however partial immersion has not been as successful. Research findings indicate that students will speak French and will achieve as well

if not better than their English counterparts. There are advantages to early immersion as far as fluency and use of the verb system go, but not in the sociolinguistic domain because of the "ceiling effect" reached after a period of steady progress. Students in middle or late immersion programs are successful not at reaching native French proficiency but the attainment of high proficiency level, good academic progress and the ability to transfer writing and reading skills in the second language. Most researchers believe that all students can benefit from the immersion program, although they may be of below average intelligence, lower than average academic ability or even with some degree of language impairment. Students with learning disabilities do have some difficulties in processing language in context-reduced situations but their second language proficiency skills are indistinguishable from their English counterparts.

Summary of Literature Review

French immersion programs are seen as a disruption of the educational environment in several ways mainly because planners lack an understanding of the adoption and of the implementation of the program and its problems. Literature research suggest that the implementation of the program be viewed as a serious and complex educational innovation worthy of study as well as a process requiring sound planning.

Contrary to the French immersion planners, there is an undeniable commitment to the French immersion program by French immersion parents. Not only are they responsible for spreading the program across Canada, but some researchers contend that parents play a major role in shaping their children's attitudes and that their own attitudes towards the target language and those who

speaking it affect their children's success in attaining knowledge of the second language.

Other factors that impact upon the success of the program can be found at the school level in terms of the role of the principal, the role of the French immersion teacher and curriculum resources. Several studies show that the role of the principal as an instructional leader has a significant effect upon the effectiveness of a school. Principals can help improve their schools by making use of major instructional processes such as curriculum development, clinical supervision, staff development and teacher evaluation. However related literature indicates that principals play a supportive rather than a leadership role vis-à-vis the French immersion teachers who are often the key to a successful French immersion program. Alas, school boards are experiencing difficulty in hiring "qualified" teachers to fill immersion positions, i.e., teachers that are both fluent in the second language and who possess good pedagogical skills. Other relevant criteria for hiring teachers are good interpersonal skills and English proficiency skills. The problem of availability of "qualified" immersion teachers is compounded by the problem of availability of curriculum resources, be they resource materials, library resources, diagnostic tests or materials. The issue of curriculum development needs to be addressed as well.

Despite the problems described above, research findings indicate that in general, both early and late French immersion programs have produced satisfactory results although partial immersion has not been as successful. The advantage to early immersion is fluency in the second language whereas the benefits of middle or late immersion are a high proficiency level, good academic

progress and the ability to transfer writing and reading skills in the second language.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The research literature seems divided on the need for French immersion principals to be fluent in French. While some emphasize the principal's role with parents and community in publicity and public affairs, and others stress the managerial functions, the most recent research on effective schools emphasizes the principal instructional leadership role. These are diagrammed in Figure 1.

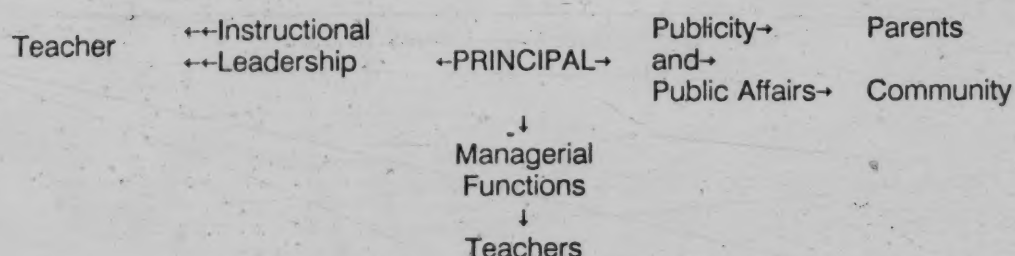


Figure 1 Alternative Roles of the French Immersion Principal

In Alberta, the recent school act emphasizes both the principal's instructional leadership function and the principal's responsibility in teacher evaluation. Most school boards require principals to evaluate teachers on a regular basis and to provide such help and assistance as is required.

Furthermore, Alberta has an acute shortage of qualified second language teachers from outside the province, most frequently from Québec, to teach in French immersion programs. Many of these teachers have limited English

proficiency. In such a context, how does an Anglophone principal with little or no knowledge of French administer a French immersion program and ensure the provision of excellence in schooling? This is the focus of this study. Methodology used to obtain answers to this question is described in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate what it means for a principal with little or no knowledge of French to administer a French immersion program in an elementary school in Alberta. This chapter describes how the study was designed and carried out.

Research Design

The design of the study was based upon the interpretive paradigm whose purpose is to bring to light the meanings and understandings of the subjective realities in the work of the principals of French immersion programs. I chose this paradigm because it was better suited to help one fully comprehend the complexities of the role of the Anglophone administrator of a French immersion program which may be influenced by a number of cultural, psychological and philosophical and political factors.

Selection of Respondents

Because of the time involved to obtain a depth of focus, the number of respondents was limited to eight elementary school principals with little or no knowledge of the French language. The administrators were from four school jurisdictions and their administrative experience varied from three to over ten years, with two to eleven years as an administrator of a school with a French immersion program. Five respondents were male and three were female.

I initially chose to approach twelve respondents who lived within reasonable

driving range of my residence and who were thought to be willing and able to participate in my study by those who suggested their names. These were given to me by various levels of administrators and/or French immersion consultants. I was familiar with only one of the respondents. All potential respondents were contacted by letter and by a follow-up telephone call to seek their participation. Of the twelve, eight agreed to meet with me for a one-hour interview at mutually convenient dates and times. Of the remainder, two were unable to participate because they had a good working knowledge of French, one did not consent due to time constraints and another refused to get involved in the study because of severe illness in her family. Those who took part in the study did so with the consent of their respective central office officials.

Of the eight interviewees, only one was a little hesitant to participate at first because of time constraints. With the exception of two administrators, all respondents were principals of dual-track schools. One participant administered a multicultural centre while another was a principal of a French immersion centre.

Pilot Study

In order to enhance my interviewing skills and to reflect upon the pertinence of the research questions, I conducted a pilot study with one elementary school principal of a French immersion school during the month of November 1988. The pilot interview was analyzed both by the researcher and my thesis advisor.

As a result of that analysis, I decided to broaden the specific research questions posed to the principals in order not to limit the principals in their responses related to their experiences as administrators of French immersion programs.

Data Collection

Following approval from the jurisdictions involved, interviews took place in early Spring 1989 (see Appendix V for an interview transcript extract). Typically, a half-day was set aside to drive to and from the schools and to conduct the actual interviews. The taped data ranged from thirty minutes to an hour per interview. Usually the respondents chatted informally to me about their work for an additional fifteen to ninety minutes.

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews. The research questions stated in Chapter One formed the basis of the interview guide. The format of the interview consisted of open-ended questions to avoid directing, controlling or narrowing information potentially available from respondents. The semi-structured questions were used to initiate a flow of conversation and were sent to respondents by correspondence along with the initial letter of contact. All interviews were tape-recorded. This enabled the interviewer to have full eye contact with the respondent, to be an active listener, to probe at the appropriate time, and to read the participant's body language throughout the interview. In all but one instance, notes were jotted down during the interview to assist in keeping track of potential probing questions.

Following transcription of the cassettes, the original transcripts were checked for accuracy of information. At that time, names of school jurisdictions, schools, principals, teachers and others were substituted to avoid identification of the respondents by the reader. All principals were given pseudonyms. The transcripts were sent to the respondents; first the original one and second, that one which respected the anonymity of those involved.

The respondents were then contacted by telephone in order to receive feedback from them as they had been asked to add to or delete parts of the transcripts with which they did not feel comfortable and, where necessary, to provide clarification on some of their comments.

Data Analysis

Using content analysis, the transcripts were examined for answers to the specific research questions.

The transcripts were colour-coded. A line was drawn on every page of each transcript with a specific coloured felt pen to differentiate between each respondent. Then, categories and sub-categories were formulated and recorded in files developed for each category. Finally, themes representing the essence of their experiences were outlined.

This process required that I familiarize myself extremely well with the eight transcripts by reading them many times.

Trustworthiness of the Data

To ensure trustworthiness of the data analysis, I resorted to methods that would justify credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as recommended by Guba and Lincoln (1981) in their article on naturalistic inquiry.

Credibility

In terms of credibility, I undertook a short telephone follow-up interview with the respondents to verify if the data I had collected were true for them. This was an opportunity to triangulate my understandings with their intentions. I also used opportunities during the interviews to paraphrase and probe for understanding and confirmation. I also discussed the findings with others who are knowledgeable of

French immersion.

Transferability

In respect to transferability, principals offered full descriptions of the notions which they were asked to discuss by providing several examples of their experiences as a French immersion principal to me. I have also used several quotes from their transcripts to allow the reader to live a vicarious experience of the principals' role as administrators of French immersion schools.

Dependability

To ensure dependability, I have supplied an "audit trail" which entailed the keeping of a log book in which I discussed my analysis of the data (see Appendix VI for a log book extract). Also I had a number of peer debriefing sessions with three of my classmates and two professors.

Confirmability

Through the keeping of the log book, I was able to reflect on how appropriate the kinds of data I was collecting were. In addition, before every interview, I wrote about my feelings and my ideas about what I thought the principal would be like and what I suspected he or she would say.

The following is a discussion of the three main methods that I used to ensure trustworthiness of the study.

Member-Checks

After the transcription of the cassettes was completed, each respondent was asked to review the transcript in question in order to be prepared to make comments and/or clarifications about what they had said during the interview when I would phone them at a later date. At that time, I had the opportunity to

discuss ideas or interpretations of the transcript. Because of the probing techniques used during the interviews, I found it necessary to discuss interpretation of data with respondents on one occasion only.

Peer Debriefing

During the content analysis of the data, I was able to have one-to-one peer-debriefing sessions with four people of whom two were classmates and teachers; one was a classmate and an administrator of a French immersion school and another person was my thesis advisor. During these peer-debriefing sessions, the appropriateness of the realities presented and the categories and themes I have identified as emerging from the data were discussed.

The Log Book

A journal was kept in which I recorded experiences, ideas, concerns, mistakes and personal reflections.

Several authors support the idea of a log book. For example, Merriam (1985) refers to Guba and Lincoln's (1982) "audit trail", describing it as "a chain of evidence" that reveals to readers how conclusions were drawn from the data (pp. 212-213). In a different article, Guba and Lincoln (1985) themselves maintain that "the writer should maintain an audit trail" because "the audit is a major trustworthiness technique, but audibility depends on the keeping of records in such a way that an auditor can later connect assertions in the report with the raw data on which they are presumably based" (p. 366). They go on to say that "A major task that accompanies the writing is the maintenance of an audit trail". They also affirm that "The writer should report no 'fact' without noting its source, make no assertion without supportive data" (p. 368). This statement explains the second

purpose of the log book, i.e., to "dump out" researcher biases. Berg (1988) warns the researcher in the following way: "Never assume the analytic relevance of any traditional variable such as age, sex, social class, and so on, until the data shows it to be relevant" (p. 117). Guba and Lincoln (1985) assert "The reader has an opportunity to judge the extent of bias of the inquirer, whether for or against the respondents and their society or culture" (p. 359) in the context of the case study. I believe that the same objective can be achieved through a log book such as this one. Guba and Lincoln (1985) also reveal the utility of the log book in the following passage "We may note that the recording of this information prior to any substantial acquaintance with the site provides a reader a baseline of expectations, illustrates the investigators' biases, and also provides a way of estimating the openness of the investigators to the situation" (p. 363). By the same token, I hope to arrive at a certain openness about the respondents by writing my biases down in a log book (p. 363).

A third reason for maintaining a log book is to keep track of ideas during data coding and processing. Parker and Gehrke (1986) indicate that "During this coding and comparing of incidents across protocols, memos were made to record ideas and hypotheses about the categories and their properties". Moreover, the authors continue by saying that "Memo writing served to capture our speculations during the joint coding and analysis, preserving what Glaser and Strauss (1967) called "the initial freshness" of the analysts' theoretical notions (p. 107), and relieving conflict in their thought processes" (p. 231). Berg (1988) recommends to the researcher to "Frequently interrupt the coding to write a theoretical note". He claims that "Researchers should take a moment to jot down a note about these

ideas, which may well prove useful later" (ch. 5). He also believes that it orients the researcher closer to grounded theory. Turner (1981) puts the same message across but in quite a different way: "The energy of a 'drugless trip'", (Glaser 1978) he suggests, should not be dissipated by talking about the ideas when the ideas start to flow, write them down until all the links and insights have been captured" (p. 237). Guba and Lincoln (1985) urge the researcher to "stop coding and write a memo on your ideas" (p. 342). They claim that "The aim of memo writing is, primarily, to uncover the properties of the category" (p. 342).

The keeping of a log book such as this one would follow Merriam's (1985) recommendation that it serve as one of "a variety of data sources to be used to enhance the validity of the findings" (p. 208). At the same time, I saw it as a useful exercise in practising my writing skills in preparation for the first draft of the thesis document. As Merriam (1985) points out, "The process of conducting a case study (or an interpretive study in my case) is perhaps more art than skill, the success of which is somewhat dependent upon the sensitivity, tolerance and flexibility of the investigator" (p. 214).

Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the study was sought through the appropriate administrative channels.

Respondents were informed in writing that their participation was voluntary and that all responses would remain confidential. Although quotations from interviews are used in this document, the sources have not been identified.

Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology used in this study. The purpose

of this study was to investigate what it means for an anglophone principal with little or no knowledge of French to administer a French immersion program in an elementary school in Alberta. The design of the study was based on the interpretive paradigm. The piloted data collection instrument was used in interviewing eight respondents. The findings were analyzed based on content analysis. The methods used to ensure trustworthiness of the study were member-checks, peer debriefing and the keeping of a log book.

CHAPTER IV

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

Chapter IV contains the findings of the study based on the content analysis of the data. The main categories which emerged from the data were: commitment, understanding the context of French immersion programs, communication, depending on others, concerns and advice. This chapter also describes the underlying themes found from the interviews with the principals.

Categories

Commitment

During the interviews, many of the administrators alluded to the concept of commitment. The meaning of the notion of commitment on the part of the principal varied from one respondent to another, however, all agreed that it was a critical factor in the successful implementation and continuation of a French immersion program. The interviewees also recognized the high level of commitment to the second language programs on the parts of both the immersion parents and teachers. They considered their own attitudes including "being sold on the program" as important factors affecting their level of commitment.

Being Sold on the Program

Several of the respondents emphasized the need for the administrator to have a commitment to a second language instruction concept. Corey commented:

First of all, I think a Principal going into a French immersion program has to be committed to a second language concept, I don't care what the language is. And the fact that the world is shrinking, you

know the philosophical things we talked about, the world is shrinking, it's nothing today to think about going to Southeast Asia or Africa or wherever. A second language would do you in good stead and French you know is spoken world-wide in Southeast Asia, Africa, Europe. There are other languages that would do you just as well, but I think first of all you have to be committed to the fact that second language learning is important.

Faye was very vehement in explaining her view that second language instruction was essential in the education of Canadian students.

You have to believe it, you have to believe, the administration has to believe, that this is essential for the education of Canadian students. If you don't treat it seriously, or you shove it off to the side, you're going to have a mess and I walked into a mess here.

Gail saw having a commitment to the program as helping the administrator to take a stand on controversial issues such as the transfer of French immersion students to the English program.

Any new principal has to be very open and accepting of the French immersion. I think you have to have that commitment. You have to have that or you cannot possibly, I mean how can you if you're not committed to this program, how can you say then, when a parent comes in and wants to transfer the kid out and you say, "Sure no problem, we'll just transfer him out," unless you make a stand and say why are you doing this, you know for what reason. I've talked more people out of doing this because I've said, "Look you're not doing your child any good by doing it, otherwise he'll fail, why don't you leave him in until at least the end of Grade Six," you know and I try and give them statistics on the French. Some of them are worried, you see, that their language English language is going to fault. I say "Statistics don't show that. The statistics show that the kid will do better. Give it a chance, your child isn't losing anything and they're gaining a second language." So you have to have that commitment.

Bob explained how becoming more knowledgeable about the program through reading research articles and so on can increase the administrator's chances of "being sold on the program".

Secondly, they'll have to become very knowledgeable about the whole philosophy of bilingual education. Read as much of the research as possible, go listen to people like Jim Cummings [a well-

known researcher in the field of second language and immersion education] and so on. Find out as much as you can about it because if you're an administrator, if you have an administrator who maybe deep down isn't sold on the product, you're not going to get a very good school. And I've seen that happen within our system. I've seen administrators who are a bit sceptical, it showed. They didn't get the enrolment, they didn't get the commitment from staff or parents. You need an administrator who is truly committed to bilingualism.

This respondent who also viewed his role as that of a "salesman" could not see how he could "sell" the program if he did not believe in it.

And you know he helped delay a lot of fears, he was the first one that really gave me a lot of information about French immersion programs and he sold me on the idea of French immersion being a good thing. And of course you can't sell something that you're not convinced about yourself.

Faye compared getting sold on the program to getting sold on a car because both involve time and research.

Well first of all, they've got to read the research because they've got no background. I had no background and I, of course I do that in life, like if I'm going to buy a car, it takes me two years, or if I'm going to get involved in something that's a pretty big deal and I think that this program is a pretty big deal, I have to go and find out about it.

"Seeing is believing" was something that also convinced Bob about the program in addition to research. "And of course I hadn't seen the product of it then because it was just a growing program. Now I've seen the product. You know we produce a very good student."

Corey talked about the commitment to a second language instruction concept, irrespective of the language, as being more important than knowing the language.

Now in every case, the Assistant or the Principal was bilingual. It was a different language. In the last school she was a bilingual in German. You have a little bit of a feeling for a language and so you

have a commitment to it. I have been in a German language school and I don't know a stitch of German and yet I don't think that impeded the progress of the German program.

This view was also expressed by Alan who saw the lack of knowledge of French as minor in comparison with the need for commitment from Central Office in terms of time, preparation and setting program objectives.

Whether I could speak French or no is really minor. The major thing was having some preparation and some background ideas on what it is we're trying to do here and so on and so forth ... You know so I think that if there is anything at all that school boards and administrators have to do, it's that they have to be given a fair amount of lead time to get prepared and they have to be made aware that there needs to be preparation done, you just don't jump into this thing and solve it and things are going to be successful, it doesn't work that way.

This principal was greatly concerned with the lack of commitment to the program on the part of some school boards.

But that is the key thing. I think a lot of school boards, I'm positive, I could be wrong, but I'm positive that a number of school boards got involved with this and I'm convinced in my own mind that some of them that got into it thought well it won't last that long so they didn't lose a lot of sleep over it and as a result they didn't do a lot of preparation work and they didn't allow their administrators to get prepared properly. It didn't go away, it's still here and is going to be here forever and a day.

Alan saw the lack of commitment on the part of the school boards as having a direct impact on the effectiveness of the school principal.

I guess as I say that the bottom line as far as the administration is concerned, is preparation, like school boards and superintendents have to know where they're going first of all and if they don't know where they're going then some poor principal is sure going to have himself a problem and if they know where they're going and they prepare properly that will be great.

Reasons for Commitment

Respondents' attitudes towards the existence of the immersion and second

language programs emerged from the interviews.

Being positive.

Faye stressed the importance of being positive for the good of the program.

But I had a talk with myself about this program when it first started because I knew there was anxiety for me too, I was supposed to know all the answers as an administrator and I didn't. Well I got a lot of the answers from researching, just parroting, and hope it's true and you smile and you know, if you're going to be negative, you're not going to have a program.

School as a reflection of society.

Alan explained why he believes that multi-program schools should teach staff and students to "get along" in society.

I just think it would be terrible in Alberta in particular if you had French immersion isolated from the other kids. Like if those kids played by themselves, and those kids and those teachers only dealt with themselves and those teachers over here. That's not a school because a school should reflect what society is and what we're trying to do in society is to teach people how to get along, and if you can't do that within a school then how do you expect those kids to go out into society and cope with each other. Yeah, that's going back to the dark ages where the girls went to one school and the boys went to another school and then you expect it when they're eighteen to go out there and get along with each other, having never been, never played with each other. So it would be the same thing.

Bob confirmed this view of schools.

I know that some of the research shows that the best setting for learning language is of course the single program school where it's all French for example or all Ukrainian and that may be true, but I'm thinking that we're also educating children in Alberta where you know we would want them to be tolerant of other cultures and languages and so on and so forth. I very much believe in a multi-program school.

I know that language wise that flies in the face of let's say developing strong French skills if they're mingling with Ukrainian and in English program students too, but I don't think it really does. I think that basically they're developing excellent French skills in the school and in School D as well. But I do know that the way that children and

staff work together is very good.

Giving students opportunities.

Alan expressed his view about students having the right to learn a second language and having the choice of unconventional programs be they language or otherwise.

It's a good thing that it is going to be because there is nothing wrong with it. Children should have the right to learn in more than one language whether it be French or Chinese or whatever. I see a great need for Japanese to come into our schools as well now and if you can run a class full of people learning Japanese that would be good too.

Corey shared the same view as Alan.

But I think it's a personalized thing. I know that there are some administrators that consider other programs, be they language or be they something else, you know we have academic alternative schools and we have other kinds of schools in the system, Fine Arts Schools, and I know that some administrators say you know those are frills, just let us do the job that we're supposed to and teach kids to learn and we'll teach them in the language that is common to everybody in that area. I don't follow that philosophy, I think that there are other things that we can do in life other than read, write and arithmetic. I think that there, you know, language learning or whether it's a Fine Arts School, I think there are other areas that youngsters can get into. Some youngsters simply are not happy with a conventional program and why shouldn't we jump on those opportunities for the fine or performing arts or the graphic arts or language learning, all of those things are important and we try to do a little bit of it in schools all the time, but I think we're talking about specialty kinds of schools. But language learning, I mean language is a very basic component to our existence. We have to communicate. I think language learning is important.

Corey shared his belief that French language should be offered as an option in all schools.

My area is Social Studies so I have no background in second languages other than I speak another language and I find it very important to me, but I think a Principal has to be committed to a second language, French preferably, it's an official language of the country, I think we should have French in all of our schools at some

level, I don't know if French immersion would work in every one of our schools right now in the public system, eventually it will come I'm sure. I'm sure that Immersion will become the only French program available to youngsters in elementary schools. It'll still be an option, but it'll be the program because I'm not satisfied with the extended French. I'm having frustrations with the extended French. French immersion should be in the elementary schools right through until Grade Six. What happens after Grade Six is another question. I haven't got that far yet, but I'm convinced that it should be available.

Principals were committed to the French immersion programs for a variety of reasons; some held it important based on a philosophical argument, while others were convinced by research or the students' capabilities.

Understanding the Context

Many respondents talked about the notion of "misconception" as being the root to many potential problems associated with French immersion programs, hence the need for all directly or indirectly concerned with the program to develop a greater understanding of the context of French immersion programs.

Students Were No Different

Some of the respondents interviewed were clear in stating that although the French immersion program is different from the English programs, French immersion students were in fact no different from non-immersion students. They talked about having to drive this message across to students, teachers and parents alike.

Sometimes I think parents and administrators and everybody, they have to also be aware that children will become quite like "I'm in French, like who are you", that type of feeling too, that just because you're in French, you're no different from anybody else. And not to make that distinguishing remark.

Another problem that we have here in this school jurisdiction is that we draw children from outside our school boundaries, so we have children coming from many different areas, they come by bus and I have had to deal with discipline problems because of children

thinking they were different and I work very hard with the children, in fact I won't respond to complaints from one child to another "because he's in the French program", or on the other hand, "somebody from the English program". I will not entertain those ideas at all and I am forever talking to everybody about the fact that the children are no different, they are all Anglophone children, they're simply being educated in a different way, in a different language.

and what I like about it and I have a good example of this is that I had one teacher on staff who maybe even yet still resents the French immersion aspect but certainly did resent it at the beginning and didn't like it so I made him teach Phys. Ed. to the French immersions the second year here and his attitude changed completely. But had I never done that, this person would have still felt some animosity. Well, once he was thrown into this situation with these kids, he found out "Hey, this is not so bad after all, they're just kids like the rest of the kids".

Gail explained how the belief that immersion students were the "cream of the crop" is a fallacy.

There was also a feeling at first that the cream of the crop went to the French. I mean the rest of the grades didn't have any, all the top ones went there, and I'm saying no they're not, but nobody would believe me of course because naturally there was some resentment against the French you know. But it's the idea that they're all top kids and I say isn't it amazing when you do exams at the end of the year that not all the French are at the top. You have got in English six or eight or nine and the French are dispersed in between. Well gradually that idea has sort of come off now okay. Because I really pounded on this that you're going to think that the French have all got the top and you're left with you know the lower half, your children aren't going to rise as far as you expect them to, but if you think that you've got the best, then they're going to be the best and this is coming around slowly. So we've not had that part the last little while, you know they're sort of getting used to the idea, we also have weak ones in French, we have middle ones, and yes we have good ones. So do you in your class. The first class maybe had a lot of really good students, you know they really did, they did have a lot of good students. I found though, if we could have had two classes, it would have been easier to intersperse them.

Bob however found that there is some preselection of immersion students.

we have to take whoever comes there and I said well to some extent we'll know it's not true because of the French program, it's first come, first serve, but also I find that the people who really want a good education for their children tend to be the ones that you get.

So there is some preselection.

Parental Involvement

A number of the participants of this study commented on the strong commitment of immersion parents to education, the school and the program.

I don't know, it has its peaks and valleys, usually the French immersion parents have a very high commitment to education in general, the school and the program itself.

But I would say that the French language parents, or the second language parents because I noticed this in the German program as well, those parents are very committed to the program. They want to see it go no matter what. They're very, very committed.

It's been a very active group of parents and French parents are usually the ones that always came in and volunteered, the English not as much, French are very active and maybe that says something that they're the ones that want their kids in the French program.

there was a tremendous amount of parental input at that time. They needed somebody who could deal with parents and deal with parent groups and so on and I've pretty successfully shown that I could do that. So they sent me there more as an administrator than anything else

Alan talked about having to channel immersion parents' energies in the right direction if they were to be kept from "running the show".

but the parental pressure (strong emphasis here) that was there, all principals have gone through that and had I understood that a little better I would have known how to cope with that. Certainly in my second year, that was not a problem and it certainly hasn't been a problem since cause I've learned from the first year what the score was so that is very crucial, having an understanding that this is a different situation that you're being involved in. You've got one of the very strongest parent-teacher PTA groups that we've ever invented when you start dealing with French immersion and I don't think I understood that, I think I was told that this had existed and Teacher B probably knew that too but she didn't really understand just how powerful they were and I think that is #1 and there is nothing wrong with that. I don't condemn that group, or anything like that. They're just a super group of people. They're very aggressive and you've got to be able to harness that and channel it in the right direction. But, if you're not aware of it, you don't have a clear understanding

of it. If you don't have a clear understanding of it, you don't make the best use of that, and then they're running the show rather than you running the show.

Bob was of the same opinion as Alan.

The ability to work with very demanding parents. I find that you channel their energies in the right direction and they're fantastic.

Donald noticed that immersion parents involved at his school which is situated in a higher socio-economic area pose questions of a pedagogical nature rather than strictly asking if their children are behaving or not.

A big difference that I have noticed here though and I think it's prevalent in all of our language programs, not just the French language, but the Ukrainian and Polish, is we get a higher percentage of our total populations that are professional people. I know in our school if I look down all the class lists, we've got lots of sons and daughters of teachers, doctors, lawyers, engineers; more so than some schools that I was involved in before.

But, I think part of that is because of our geographic location. Where we are is a high socio-economic area. Some French immersion schools in different parts of the city are not like ours. We have one school in another part of the city whose population is composed more of blue collars workers. These parents are concerned just as much as ours are, but they may be asking different questions than our parents ask. Our parents ask curriculum questions. They ask pedagogical questions and discipline questions such as "how is little Susie or Johnny doing in school, are they being good ... or bad". We get second and third questions and, I guess, as teachers we have to be aware of that and we have to be able to respond.

Handling Opposition to French

Several respondents in this study indicated that there existed some opposition to French or Immersion programs in one form or another on the part of non-immersion students, teachers and/or parents who feel that preferential treatment is given to the immersion program at the expense of the non-immersion program. Non-immersion teachers fear the loss of their jobs whereas non-

immersion parents and students do not want to be displaced due to the immersion program. Knowing the feeling of the community and how to handle these concerns was important for administrators. Corey explained:

I haven't found myself stressed. You'll always have the faction of parents and teachers that are opposed to French. I've found that in every school I've been in. In the German language school I found the same thing relating to German, and I think it is basically a fear of English language teachers that they might lose their jobs.

It's a real fear that they're being pushed aside; that they're no longer important. All of these factors come into play. So, you hear comments from parents that their youngsters are being short-changed. I hear it here in this school and at the other school. I think, for their part, it was mostly misconception and I think that is 99% of the problem.

But, at the same time, you know I'm not going to sell the English program parents short because we have a good number of English program parents that are equally interested ... in education in general, the school in particular, and they want to make sure the English program does not die. And, you do have situations where a language program has overtaken the English program in terms of numbers of students, and you have parents feeling almost as if they're going to be kicked out of their community school because of another program. And, that has happened in both systems.

Heather, Gail and Donald also commented on the existence of an underlying current of prejudice or resentment towards French.

That problem is relevant among parents and every once in a while it flares up and I have to deal with it. Some of our English parents have the impression that the French children, here I am falling into the trap, aren't I, the children in the Immersion program are getting something that their children are not getting. There are still feelings of prejudice and I have to deal with those. And again, I deal with the parents in a similar way that I deal with the children.

Now there is some resentment out there yet with the French. There are several people that are dead set against French immersion; doesn't matter what it is ... whether it's French, French immersion or what. I would like to see core French brought into Grade Four, or Grade Two, or Grade Three for everybody; mandatory so that everybody gets a half-an-hour everyday. I think that would do a lot to alleviate the little bit of animosity there is.

When we did the two musics together, the English and French, there were some problems, but I think we've ironed them out. It really surprised me because the English teach the French and the French bond together on their own. It surprised me. I didn't think it was that, shall we say, prevalent and yet, I don't want to use that word because it's too strong; it isn't really. But, there is an underlying current. Some of it is generated, I think, by the parents; most certainly, those that don't want anything to do with French.

We have three hot dog days each year by English and three by the Canadian Parents for French. I've actually had a parent tell me, or a child tell the teacher, that "I'm not buying any hamburgers because it's put on by the French." Now, that's strong French feeling! Now, I'm saying, why would anybody say that? So, there is very strong anti-French; I think it's a minority, very, very few.

I had one teacher that was opposed. He was extremely annoying in the beginning as you had only one French teacher or two and, it's tough for them. Anyway, they held their ground and the other teachers figured it's coming anyway; Canada is a bilingual country which, I thought, was very broad-minded. We're in Alberta and this is really "redneck" country.

Alan and Faye both showed concern for the fact that some people do not dissociate French immersion programs and education from Québec and politics.

I think people had a wrong impression as to what went on. Here you had a lot of people associating French immersion with politics rather than with education and those two things are entirely separate. They have nothing to do with Québec and politics, it has to do with giving children a broader education and that's all it is and I think red-neck Albertans still have a lot of difficulty separating those two. They just can't get them separated and so, as a society we have people that grow up in this society and they don't see things quite clearly ... because they've made up their own mind about what they want for their own children, their families and they couldn't care less. I can remember people when we were initially starting. You have to counsel the moms and the dads and the parents because they hear such terrible things from their neighbours over coffee and they'd be called stupid for putting their kids in French because look after all what's going on in Québec, and I used to tell them, "Well look guy, you go back to your neighbour at your next coffee party and tell them that if they want their children's education and future to be affected by what some stupid politician's doing in Québec, be my guest. But that isn't what's going to affect my child's education. Who cares what they're doing in Québec."

Donald suggested that hard feelings toward French and the Immersion program are to be expected since resistance is part of the process of planned change. "Well, apparently from what I've gathered from the previous principal, there were some hard feelings. I think whenever you initiate a new program, you're going to have some resistance. That's part of change. That was inevitable. They expected that."

Because of the need to understand the community's feelings and to be prepared to compensate for and handle opposition to the program, Donald stressed the importance of being familiar with the school culture. He believes that this criterion supercedes that of the knowledge of the French language on the part of the school administrator.

One of the things, it just came to mind now, that might be important is when we were talking about having someone who is a good administrator and knowledgeable in French ... I think it's important to consider having Administrators in schools in certain areas that are familiar with the culture of the area. An example might be, to hire a good French Administrator from Québec, France, or wherever. This person brings their culture, their background, their expectations, their goals and visions for what French language education is to Edmonton, or to a small town in Alberta. I don't think it's going to work because the children and the parents' expectations are different. We should be careful of this. And as for Trustees, I think it would be better to develop some people in our own system like our Board. We've been fortunate; the program has been building and we've got eight schools with lots of teachers. We're starting to develop a good pool of people that would make successful, knowledgeable Administrators. This hasn't happened in the past, but we're starting to get there now.

Acculturation of Teachers

Donald elaborated on the wide variety of French immersion teachers in Alberta due to the supply and demand factor.

The background of our teachers, we've got teachers that are native Francophones; we've got some that were born in countries other

than Canada, and this is their third language; we've got some that are from Anglophone backgrounds that took their French only through high school and learned through the Faculté St. Jean. They are teachers here. Therefore we have a wide variety of children, teachers and parents who may have the same mixture.

Faye alluded to the fact that non-Albertan French immersion teachers arrive in this province with a different mindset. Both agree that acculturation of these teachers takes time.

I've experienced teachers that are from Québec, and the first year they were hired almost over the phone. They're coming into a new situation, and it's different living in Edmonton than someplace in Québec. It's different and their mind-set is what their education was like; it's a big difference teaching here and teaching there.

Donald is in agreement with Faye's observation.

After a couple of years, they become culturalized. I would think that, let's say, they're a better teacher than when they first arrived. They're knowledgeable in French, but they were not knowledgeable in other areas.

Four years ago, we had two teachers that knew, I'll say, 50 words in English. Good teachers, but it was difficult for them because they had to do all the culturalizing first ... and that takes time.

Faye explained that sometimes Francophone Immersion teachers can "sound blunt" because of their limited vocabulary.

The way they perceive things is a little different from the way we perceive them. But, we have to be open to each other, and then you can learn. I know now, regarding my own French, that I would sound blunt in a parent-teacher interview due to my limited vocabulary. Therefore, the teachers whose first language is French, can come across very blunt with the children or in parent-teacher interviews due to a limited English vocabulary. They need help with this. They are using the English language to the best of their ability, but they do not have the nuances of the language to soften their statements. If they're with us long enough, they learn plenty of English.

Respondents found the need to understand the context of French immersion parents on the part of school district administrators as well as school administrators, teachers, parents and students alike to be an important factor in promoting acceptance of the program. They perceived students of French immersion programs as no different from their English peers, a strong commitment and involvement of French immersion parents in their childrens' education, some opposition to French in their local school community and the acculturation of teachers as taking time. One felt that the understanding of the culture of the school community was an important factor to take into consideration before making decisions about the school.

Communication

Respondents discussed their public relations with the community, working with parent groups and the impact of their interpersonal skills.

Marketing the Program

Many of the participants in this study stressed the importance of developing and maintaining good public relations with non-immersion parents as well as immersion parents and with the local community at large. They referred to public relations not as putting on a good face for the public, but rather as informing and educating parents and other citizens in the local school community about the program as much as possible to avoid feelings of prejudice arising in the school or in the community.

Half of the administrators interviewed in this study saw their role as "selling" the immersion program. "Selling the program" for Faye and Heather meant that they had to educate the public about the goals of the French immersion program

in order for people "to keep things in perspective" and to avoid prejudices arising towards French immersion as "an alternate educational program".

I think that we always have to be aware of our public relations. It's important to both sides. The way that we market this program to the community is very important and, I believe, that we do have to market the program. If we do a good job, it is accepted. If we don't, you run into many prejudices.

So, I think marketing the program, marketing generally what we're trying to do in education, and ensuring that you articulate what you are doing carefully enough so that people can keep things in perspective.

I feel that I sell the program, as you do, but I know that it's an alternative educational program. I'm not going to beat around the bushes to get kids into it, because I've been with it long enough to know and I say at the information meetings, and we're having one tomorrow night, and I'm speaking at, it's in this school that this is an excellent program.

Bob, who also views himself as a salesman, explained his role in terms of educating the public about the French immersion program. However, he was clear in pointing out that he was highly motivated to sell the program because of the open boundaries factor in his school jurisdiction.

Within this school jurisdiction, we're quite different as you are aware from some other Boards in that we have open boundaries, totally open boundaries. I look upon myself as a salesman. I'm selling my school. Whenever I have any parent who wants to come into any of our programs, I sit down with them, like I am with you, talk to them about the program. I have envelopes of research materials up there of the Ontario Institute for Studies, that handle the various agencies in terms of bilingual education. Jim Cummins has a number of his articles in here. I give them a package of information and I take them on a tour of the school. We go to the kindergarten room, for example; we go to a Grade One room; we go to the Grade Six room so that we can see these classes in action, and, if they have any other questions, they meet with me again and we sit down and talk, talk it over, and I do that for all of the programs. I meet with everyone of my parents before they come in. It's time consuming, but it pays off in the long run because they know more about the program. They feel a little more comfortable about having a child come to this school.

We run a very open school. I did that at School D and I started that here also. I have found I'm a salesman for the program.

You're an ambassador for your school and for those programs. You're out selling; you're a salesman.

Another respondent, Corey, acknowledged the "selling" aspect of administering a French immersion program. However, he found that this was not unique to the French immersion program, but also applied to other programs at any of their entry points. In addition, he saw the French immersion program as "becoming less and less of a selling job" because of its benefits.

I think that's [selling] true for everything, not only French immersion. Yes, we do sell programs. We're selling French immersion at the Kindergarten - Grade One level because those are the entry points. We're selling Junior High programs for Junior High; Senior High programs at the Senior High level. Our students are going from Junior High to probably one of three high schools in the city. And, yes, they've heard the sales pitch if you want to call it that. We do that, no question. It's becoming less and less of a selling job for French immersion, because people are becoming more interested in it and they know that some of the Federal Government initiatives require bilingual competency. That's a fact of life. So, we do sell, no question. But, it's not only French immersion, we're selling other things too.

As well as being careful in "marketing" the program, Heather sees herself as an "ambassador". She also sees her students and staff as ambassadors and explained how she lets them know this.

I see myself as an ambassador. I see my secretaries, my teacher aides and my teachers, and, as a matter of fact, that's a very common word in our assemblies because I think the children are ambassadors too, and I tell them that. Whenever we have a guest in, whenever any of us go away on a field trip, or when we're playing in the neighbourhood, I say to the children, others don't know you as well as I know you, so therefore they judge you on their first impressions and on your behaviour and on the way that you treat other people. So, you are ambassadors every day of your life. It doesn't always work, Nicole, but that's what we always talk about. We use those times to do our own little bit of propagandizing, I

guess.

Working with Parents and Parent Groups

Across the country, parents of French immersion students have come together to form an association called "Canadian Parents for French", active at the local, provincial and national levels alike. Gail explained that in the recent past, several parents joined their CPF local chapter because "they felt they would have a little bit more clout when things with Central Office had to do with the French, that they could voice their opinions a little bit more effectively." Although CPF was successful in their lobbying, its members will no longer lobby as a group, but will rather do so as concerned parents. From now on, if parents have concerns, they are to present them to the main school executive body, namely the local school advisory council, which includes a representative of CPF who serves as a liaison between the parent group and the school. Gail feels that this new process "has brought everybody sort of a little bit together".

When Heather began to perceive problems between immersion and non-immersion parents, she too changed the set-up of the parent association in the following way:

I have one representative from each classroom making up the basic executive. Out of that base of people the officers are selected. They make up the executive. Anyone can come to the meetings. Anyone! Those people must come. If they cannot come, they have to find someone else from that classroom to represent the classroom. It does two things for me: I have equal representation because every classroom is represented; it also brings out more people to the parent meetings because traditionally you get a very small turnout at a parent meeting group. Often these people are encouraged to bring someone else. They don't have to, but they're encouraged to. When new families come into the school, someone is delegated to bring someone from the new family out to the meeting if they wish. It works very well.

Canadian Parents for French is considered to be "a very active group" whose role is mainly the promotion of the program through information meetings, pamphlets, etc., and fundraising for cultural and educational purposes.

Faye feels that CPF plays a useful role in that it alleviates her workload in regard to organizing various extra-curricular activities. "The parents' group, of course, do the summer camps and they have the singing club here. They have all that stuff. I don't have to do anything. They do it. I couldn't do it; I'm busy enough."

Principals also encourage parents as individuals to come into the school as well to help out in various ways even though most of them do not speak French. She commented that "you can't make that a rule (i.e., only accepting French-speaking parents as volunteers in the classroom), or you would not have anybody in here. Some of those parents are nervous enough having their children [in the program]".

Gail has made a point of trying to bring immersion and non-immersion parents to work for the school as a whole. "We have really tried to instil with English, as well as French, that we're doing things for everybody in the school. They have to work, you know, all together in the community, so do you have to work here."

Interpersonal Skills

All participants in this study emphasized the need for the principals to demonstrate good interpersonal skills when dealing with others because they felt that they must be able to show leadership and sensitivity towards both immersion and non-immersion teaching and student personnel. They talked about having

to perceive and recognize the needs, concerns and personal problems of others and of being skilled at resolving conflicts involving students and/or teachers.

Focus on one school.

All respondents interviewed in this study were concerned with the concept of "oneness" in the school. Their focus was on a school-wide philosophy rather than a programming philosophy. This school-wide philosophy appeared to be the basis of a number of directions taken in their schools. Ed and Gail put the concept of "oneness" across in the following ways:

But, it is the philosophy of the school that we are one school. We are not three schools in one building. All of the priorities and goals are discussed amongst all of us. The French immersion, hearing impaired and regular program teachers agreed to what we would do as a school. In terms of staff, the staff has been very accepting of the program thus far; very accepting of the teachers who are in the school because they also buy into our philosophy and it's a school-wide philosophy and not a programming philosophy. The problems I have heard of and have been a part of in other schools have not, as yet, reared their ugly heads here. It's a commitment that I have to see that this sort of thing does not happen.

We have tried to stress this interaction with everything we do. My philosophy has always been this is not just French and English, everything is together here, we are one school. So, if we have a film, it's together. If we have a play, it's together. If we're doing an operetta, it's together, whoever you know; I mean, this is it. I've always stressed this; the idea that this is not separate; we're together.

Many of the principals interviewed gave examples of how they try to "work across program" to develop a feeling of "oneness" in their schools. Some of the principals' strategies are to have the national anthem sung in English, or in the second language alternately and to have all students from each program come together to participate in various activities, curricular, or extra-curricular alike.

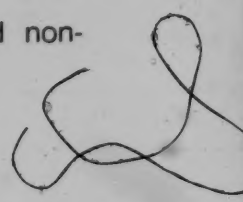
as well, we do a lot of whole-school things. We mix the kids up in family-time situations where French immersion, students from another

program and regular kids from Kindergarten to Grade Six are mixed for certain activities on a monthly basis. We do the singing of the national anthem in both languages; concerts and things like that. The French immersion students contribute just as much as everybody else. And, we have the Oratory Contest. You know we take part in that, and that's strictly French and that's fine, you know; that is French. But, practically everything else that we do is together. We did not do Bonhomme [Carnaval] this year, but we will probably next year.

And, in that school and now in this one, you know, for example, even "O Canada" is sung by everyone in all three languages. Everyone begins in Ukrainian no matter what program you're in, then switch into French and finish in English. It was just, sort of, a little gimmick, you know, but that was just one of the things that you know we developed. Another thing, in terms of trying to work across the programs to develop a feeling that you know oneness for the school and we teachers did a lot of things together you know, across the languages. They expose each other, each other to the other languages. You know, it's very common that children in this school and over in School D when they heard French, and maybe didn't even understand much of it, or Ukrainian, didn't bother them at all, they would sit and be a good audience; you know, if it was play or something and, when we would have our Ukrainian play, or something, the teacher might explain a little bit of it ahead of time to give them a feeling for what was going on. They were exposed to the languages a lot.

Now, we integrate them [students] as much as possible; where we have Phys Ed by another teacher; where we try, as much as possible, to get them in with the other kids. We did last year put them into a double music class in Grade Six. It took a long time for those kids to interact. So we've used these different strategies. Any performance that we have, cultural performance, everybody, like we had Bonhomme for two years; everybody took part in Bonhomme. Every classroom had a parade, like a thing to put in the parade for Bonhomme; everybody learned about Bonhomme. Everybody had the sugar, sugaring off, so it was not just French and English, the cultural performances we brought in, some were French, some were in English. Some of the kids went, but the teachers said they really didn't understand the French, so I said there is not much point. Either we get a cultural performance then that's English and French can be combined and that's okay.

One administrator, Gail moved all classes of the same grade in close physical proximity to encourage interactions between immersion and non-



immersion students and teachers.

The feeling over here was quite negative towards the French. It was like it got all the better kids, tada, tada. Now, what I did was first, I moved all the Grades; they were spaced everywhere, Grade Twos there, Grade Sixes up there and you name it. I said people cannot work together if they aren't in close proximity to each other so we moved everybody so that the Grade Twos were together, the Grade Threes were together and the Grade Fours were together. Then, I said you're going to have to learn to work in grade groups now.

Another strategy of hers is to arrange grade level meetings between immersion and non-immersion teachers.

We have grade level meetings. This year is the first year that we're having assemblies and the teachers have grade level meetings while we take over the assemblies, so that they have to meet together as a group with the ones especially from Grades Two to Six because of the English Language Arts exam, the Math exam, the French is identical to the Math exam in English so they can work together there with their math problems. Their Math situations are all the same. Their Language Arts and English are the same. We have a French Coordinator who coordinates only with the French on problems, or whatever; that's only related to the French.

So, we have tried many different ways and, of course, saying the French do not have the brightest students. So, that idea has sort of gone now. So, by putting them together, having to work in grade groups, and the idea that we are one; none of this, you know, separate groupies; we are one. I think we're slowly getting over that; slowly.

Gail also makes a point to buy equipment for the whole school, not just for one program.

We never allocate any equipment just to French. Anything we buy, or the parents buy, or whatever; and the parents in French make a point to buy things for the whole school, not just for the French.

Fairness.

A few respondents interviewed saw it as one of their main roles as administrators to make sure that neither program was perceived by students,

teachers or parents as having preferential treatment over the other.

No, I don't find lack of French really affects my role that much. I'm, you know, an instructional leader. I think you can still do that to an extent even though you're not familiar with the language. I think the main role is one of an administrator (pause) in terms of keeping the programs so that there isn't a perception of one as having preferential treatment over the other. Fairness is very, very important. Everyone has to feel good about their own programs. And, feel good about the other programs so that's why we try to do so many things across programs.

However, there are parents in the community, in the English program, that feel that the English program is being short-changed. We have parents in the French program that feel the French program is being short-changed and I have to be very careful to make sure that both programs are getting their fair share of resources; be they teachers, monetary, print or non-print; that whole area. But, I find it very interesting that everybody finds themselves as the ones being picked on. And, I don't know why that mentality exists, but it does.

Contrary to Bob and Corey, Gail took exception to the notion of "fairness". She felt that treating students equally was in itself unfair. She strongly believed that if administrators can justify their allocation of monies and resources on the basis of the program and students in question, then they "should not have to worry who thinks its fair". She elaborated on this point quite at length.

One of the worst things you can do for children is to treat them all equally. That is really unfair. If we treated the kids in the school equally, all the special education kids would be expected to get along with a lot less. What they need, we buy them. They get extra money too and nobody complains about the fact that they're getting extra money.

One of the big parental complaints here, this last year, was the English enrolment as compared to the French immersion enrolment. But, if I've got ten in one Grade in English and twelve in the English class the next grade up. Nobody will let me have a grade of eleven or ten and a grade of twelve. I have to put them all together. Well, if I need splits in French immersion, I'll make them. But, I didn't have to. And, if the people see that as unfair, they might come in here and staff the school; I'm sure I don't care. But there was a letter in the paper last year from some Anglo person from this school complaining about that. But, anybody with one ounce of brain can see that the

way you put the thing together is the sensible way to do it. Maybe you don't like it; I didn't. I have a Five-Six split. I had x students at the end of June in English and I ended up with a larger number. Well, I now have a full-time aide. And this is for the Anglo we're talking kids here. We're not talking English, French or Swahilian. It's what the child in any given program needs. You do the best you can, but I can't manufacture money, or isn't my fault.

So, I think, as long as you in your own mind know what's needed for these kids in whatever program they're in, you don't spend your budget willy nilly. You know what you have to do and you know why you have to do it, and as long as you can justify it on the basis of the program, on behalf of the students, why should you worry who thinks it's fair. You know it's fair.

Staff cohesiveness.

Respondents spoke about the importance of staff unity for the "smooth running of the school".

It makes both programs run. Without it, you can't; you end up with people compartmentalizing and having them do things only for themselves; self-interests. It doesn't make for a smooth-running school.

I want a unified staff; a very peaceful staff; one that will get along well together. Because, if you have staff that are at each other's throats, nothing; it will show up very quickly. In my previous school I had a very unified staff and they worked really well together. I'm not saying that if you get 40 people together you don't get the odd squabble. That's normal, but you know it's very important that they work well together.

The total staff has become very tolerant. You can go into our staff room any day and they'll be giving the French immersion teachers a bad time and the French immersion teachers will be giving the English teachers a bad time. They'll all be having a good time. There is no animosity; it's just one staff and, that to me, is the key thing in running a good school and also having a good French immersion school.

As I indicated a while ago, some of those tradings of English and French program teachers, etc. we'll end up doing. But, we don't have three separate staff rooms for those kinds of things.

In the staff room, you will see one group of Francophone teachers who tend to sit together. Often, it's not so much that they're French,

you know Francophone, it's that they're all teaching primary grades. I find, for example, that some of my French teachers tend to sit more with the Ukrainian than English staff because of the grade level. They have more in common.

Faye and Heather try to avoid problems in staff relations by doing a lot of talking with teachers, both individually and in small and large groups.

Nicole, I do a lot of talking. Individually and as a group, both large and small, and as soon as I feel that there is a problem emerging. I try to be sensitive, but you cannot be sensitive to everything that happens. Most of the people here trust me. After that I start getting feedback from them and I'm able to anticipate some of the problems, so I do a lot of talking

I always found it [staff relations] fine because I never put up with any nonsense in the sense that we talk at staff meetings and other places. Here, we have special education, too, which is another program which is quite different from anything you have at another school. I never had any trouble with any of them.

Heather felt that Francophone teachers should be told about non-immersion teachers' fear of losing their jobs to help promote a better understanding between immersion and non-immersion teachers.

Right. I'm sure that someone must have very early explained to you that the English teachers felt very threatened by this program. I feel it's important that the Francophone people know and understand that and then, they are able to get to know one another on a personal basis. I find that as soon as the teachers get to know one another on a personal basis, most of that threat or that prejudice starts to dissolve.

Immersion teachers' attitudes.

Throughout the interviews with the respondents, several principals mentioned how immersion teachers' attitudes affect the dynamics of the teaching staff in a positive way sometimes and in negative ways other times.

Heather discussed compatibility among staff members as being a major factor when hiring immersion teachers.

Certainly in an interview I try to explain to these people what my expectations are and my expectations have to be compatible with their attitudes toward them. If they are willing, and one of the things that is very important to me is compatibility among staff members, because I think the more cohesive a staff is, the better everyone gets along. As soon as you have friction, and believe me, there is friction between the French and English element; sometimes its stronger than at other times depending upon personalities.

Alan's following comment seems to support Heather on the issue of hiring immersion teachers that will facilitate communication among staff members.

I would like to, but I have never had that opportunity [to select immersion teachers from a wide range of candidates]. In the years, in so far as hiring French immersion teachers, I have had to take what I could get my hands on. It just so happened that all have been bilingual, but if I had a choice, I would probably look at that for many reasons other than personal communication for staff relations, etc.

In Alan's experience, immersion teachers have been willing to try and communicate, and to get along with others, despite their lack of knowledge of English.

you know, but in all the French immersion teachers that I have had to deal with, not only in this school, but even from another city in Alberta, etc., that hasn't been a problem. They will do anything to try and make the communication go as well as possible.

Like, I don't have a problem with Teacher A. I have trouble, sometimes, trying to understand him. Even the first day he came he could hardly speak any English and as far as getting along with him, or working with him, or helping him, that really wasn't a problem. That is part of his good work. He tried very hard to learn some English. Had I been able to speak French, it probably would have been a lot easier for him, but he wasn't interested in talking in French because he won't learn English, you know.

In her experience as an administrator of a French immersion program, Heather has found it necessary to be honest with Francophone immersion teachers who sometimes set themselves apart because of their dominant

personalities or militant beliefs.

I find that some of our Francophone people, and I do not mean this to be a derogatory remark. Some of our Francophone people are fairly temperamental and very individualistic. I have, you know, there are all these people who make life interesting for you by trying to be defiant in some ways. I had one young man who, and he is an excellent teacher, one of my best teachers, but he is very much his own person and, he likes to defy authority just on the edge sometimes. I have said to him. You bring animosity onto yourself by doing that. You know you may want to prove a point, but it's not to your advantage. These people are your friends; they want to be your friends. But, every once in a while he becomes cantankerous. That's his personality. It does not detract from the kind of teacher he is. But, being a teacher is also being a staff member. So, I think that you come to a point where you can be very frank with people without them taking offence. Sometimes they may take a little bit of offence, but it's necessary.

This militancy of some Francophone immersion teachers was also noticed by Gail. This factor, coupled with the fact that English teachers have been declared surplus and their contracts terminated over the last few years are the cause of friction between immersion and non-immersion teachers.

And, you get that occasionally, but it seems to be this militancy, almost like, "Here I am" and let's face it -- bilingual teachers can get a job anywhere. English teachers in the last three years couldn't. And they were not the ones being let go. You know the English ones were and that causes a bit of friction, you see, but again, what can you do about it if you're not bilingual and we need bilingual teachers. There's nothing you can do. But yet, there's that little bit of friction.

Another respondent in this study, Bob, noted that he detected more of a friction between teachers within the same program rather than across programs.

He made the following comments:

I sometimes detect more of a friction or a faction among the Francophone teachers where you have the Québec French but if you have a Québec French, and maybe the ultra, I don't know what you call them -- right wing, or what -- but you have some Francophone teachers who, you know I can't say all Québécois but some are very (pause) almost (pause) they come across to the other

staff as almost being anti-west; very pro-Québec. Real Québécois. And, that I think, creates more friction of staff than anything else. And, I can't say all of them; they're not all of them. There's just a few. But, that's something that I've really noticed as an administrator, that there can be more friction within the program than across programs. I find that it's the Western Canadian French, and sometimes the Maritime French, who might even isolate some of the Québécois or vice versa.

He also made a remark about a few Francophone immersion teachers from Québec isolating themselves from other immersion teachers because of their Pro-Québec/Anti-west political outlook.

It's not all the Québécois, I had a Québécois on my staff that everyone loved. I had one on the staff that everyone loved last year, too. So, it all depends on personalities. But, if you get one that is very dominant; one who would stay in the same classroom and there would be no English signs in effect anywhere that type, you know, rubs the Westerners the wrong way but, that's the only thing.

Corey saw the immersion teachers' attitude towards students and the school and a commitment to a team effort as critical. He elaborated:

A program; I don't care if it's a language program, in this case French, in particular, but I don't care whether, what program it is whether it's a French language program, whether it's German, or Mandarin, or whether it's Social Studies or Home Ec. If you don't have a positive attitude towards students towards the school; if you're not a team member, a team player; it's not going to work. You're going to isolate yourself. I've been very fortunate. The staffs that I have worked with, the language teachers, have always been team players. They always work with the other language whether it was the English or whatever. And, I find the same thing happening in this school. You look at the curriculum; everybody does their thing. Outside of that, in Junior High, for example, the two coaches of the Girls Basketball Team; one is the French teacher; one is the English teacher. One is the French Language Arts teacher; the other is the English Language Arts teacher. There's a lot of mingling and interplay. We put on a program, like a musical you have French language teachers involved; you have English language teachers involved. So, the attitude, the staff rapport, commitment to a team effort; all that is critical and you know the school is the focus as opposed to a program.

Sensitivity to languages spoken in the school.

Some principals found that they had to impose on immersion teachers the rule of speaking English only in the staff room. They justified it by saying that speaking English not only facilitated communication between immersion and non-immersion teachers, but also helped in fostering a climate of trust between staff members.

When the program first came in, I had to ask my French teachers never to speak French in the staff room. As the English teachers became more comfortable with it, I was able to relax that rule. I am not as strict about it now, and I have particular English teachers who really take exception to it. There is some speaking French in the staff room. For example, we have a small table and if I sit down with a group of French teachers, I say to them please speak English. I have to concentrate too hard to understand you in French. I make very light of it. I have had to speak to them.

One thing we did do two years ago, and there were quite a few French people here and they were very "cliquey". You know, they would all sit together in the staff room and they'd be all together; you'd sit among them and they'd all keep speaking French and so, finally, I said the following year; I told the Coordinator; I said, I do not want any of this to happen again. I said you are making yourself a separate group and I won't have it. I said when I sit among you, you speak English, or else I will make it in that staff room you do not speak French; and they said, "well, it's you know, sometimes when people ask a question, it's easier to explain it in French than it is in English 'cause it's my native language." I said, "I understand that and I will allow that, but when I speak to you and I'm sitting among you and you see that there are English people among you; then I said you will speak English." And so, the last couple of years it's really been good, you know, but I had to admit it really was "cliquey" all year. And, it makes an English person who doesn't understand French and they're chatting among themselves, and sort of looking at you. You know perfectly well they're talking about you and yet you can't, you know; to me it was rude and I said it's rude and it's coarse as far as I'm concerned; it's not good manners. And, so the last couple of years has really been good. And, I'll say I love them to speak in French. So, when I'm there and other English people are there, I think you should speak in English, that's only common courtesy, I think. So, that's straightened itself out. I think the basic problem with the idea that there's some people that are anti-French and some aren't and, you know, I think it's coming; I think it's coming

really well. At least, that's my feeling.

Other principals who did not impose the English language on their staffs noted that their teacher made a special effort to accommodate each other "to reach a needed 'comfort level.'" Therefore, one would notice a lot of switching back and forth between English, French and other second languages taught at the schools.

[You noticed in the staff room that people were talking English, French; switch from one language to the other.] Because, maybe you've experienced it too, and I know when a group of people are speaking in another language and you come in, there's a feeling that either they're saying something that they don't want you to hear or the other way around maybe a custodian when he comes in, if he's not French-speaking things like that. Because there's a comfort needed with people.

We have one other school where it's about two-thirds French immersion and one-third English program. And, they make a special effort to try and accommodate each other all of the time. So, through time we've been going more towards the bilingual teachers' atmosphere, and, I guess, what you noticed in the staff room would be more prevalent.

Alan encourages dialogue between his staff members as well, but still appreciates immersion teachers' need to maintain and/or develop their skills in the second language. He made his non-immersion teachers aware of this.

Well, just for instance, right at the present time, I can walk in to the staff room and the French immersion teachers will be sitting together as a group, and they will be talking French to each other and immediately they can switch and speak English to somebody else, and everybody seems to get along reasonably well. If you had people that never wanted to speak in English, I think you would have some problems on your staff. There just wouldn't be that dialogue. And, thanks to Teacher B, I was made aware of how important it is to speak French so I know I passed it on to the teachers so that they understand that French immersion teachers have to speak French as much as possible because they have to keep their language development up. So, you know, if you have had some good people tell you some good things, and you listen and you do things right,

everything works quite well.

Bob also feels that there is "a lot of give and take on the staff" as far as what language is spoken in the school.

And, so you'll hear the languages used in the classroom, or you'll hear French in there a lot. You'll hear some Ukrainian. Not that much, and it is basically English. I have a librarian, teacher librarian who is not Francophone, but who is working to develop his French. He is now teaching extended French. His skills are coming along really well. And, of course, he wants the other teachers, the Immersion teachers to speak to him in French because it's working on his French. And, so you know, a lot of give and take on the staff; and that is very good.

Another respondent, Donald who administers a French immersion centre had a sense that it would be more difficult to keep a high level of French influence in an immersion school where English is spoken for the most part outside the second language immersion classrooms.

the children at recess, and in the hallways, and when they're out in the playground; they speak English sometimes it will be French, if the teacher will talk to them in French, they might answer in, in English. And, sometimes the children will ask in French, or whatever you know back and forth. I guess some of the other school jurisdictions, especially the smaller ones, again, where the French language program is in a minority in the school, have a more difficult time keeping the French influence at a high level.

In summary, principals stressed the importance of public relations and interpersonal skills in their work.

Depending on Others

Depending on others is the major coping strategy used by all respondents when affected by a lack of, or little knowledge of, the French language. Many respondents admitted having a heavy reliance, or dependency, upon resource people who are formally, or informally, selected to assist them in evaluating and

working with teachers and in oral and written communication.

Evaluation of the Language Proficiency

In order to ascertain immersion teachers' French language proficiency, all principals interviewed in this study rely on resource people to do so. These could be external consultants from Alberta's provincial department of education, or from the University of Alberta's French faculty of education, Faculté St. Jean; second language consultants, or supervisors, from the school district's central office, a member of the school administrative team, i.e., the assistant principal who is fluently bilingual.

Both Alan and Bob talked about the "round about way of evaluating" the French language proficiency of French immersion personnel.

If I bring in external people, [it is] mainly to deal with the quality of French because that was a concern of the parents, and I, of course, have no idea whether it's good quality French language or not, and so by bringing in people from the Department who supposedly are able to tell whether or not this teacher is using quality French language; that's the only way you can get around that of what is going on in the classroom.

you know the lessons, I can't you know, comment on the questioning strategies and things for example. I can't comment on, you know (pause), how proficient the teacher is in the French language. I have to depend upon the consultants, and so on, for that; from central office. I've also been fortunate in that in most of the schools, in most of my time in bilingual immersion schools, I have had a member of the administrative team that could speak the other language. But, I mean, that's sort of the round about way, if I was able to understand the language, I would be in a lot better position. Or, if I had a member of the staff like I had, as I say, I had my assistant in School D. Except my first year there, I've always had a French-speaking assistant which was invaluable to me. I mean, I want the language skills there too, but I have to rely upon somebody else to tell me about the language skills. Although I shouldn't say that totally. My ear is good enough that I can detect accents, and so on, in French. Maritime, you know, I find particularly, New Brunswickers, there is a very definite twang to their French.

Although Corey also relies on "key teachers" and/or his assistant principal, he commented on the support system in place, i.e., the second language consultants from central office as being "a kind of bonding that keeps the program together".

My problem is evaluating the proficiency of French. I can't do that. I have to depend on consultants to do that for me, from central office. The Assistant Principal, so-and-so, has knowledge of French. He teaches French as a second language in the Junior High. And so, if I get into a problem, language-wise, then he will help me out. At previous schools one of the Assistant Principals had a knowledge of the French language; he was a Francophone, and he basically looked after the French program there. Another Assistant Principal had no knowledge of French. Her French was worse than mine but, both of us managed very, very well because we had key teachers that were assisting us. And, the staff knows this and they're interested in doing a good job so it becomes very, very positive. So, the only area where lack of knowledge of French really occurs, I think, is in the proficiency of the French that is being taught. But, then I depend on other people to do their job, you have to have a support system in place, and we do and whenever I need help, I can call on our consultants, and they're only too willing to assist. But, heaven help us, if they ever pull those people out or they ever decide to cut those consultants. Then, we're in trouble. They are a kind of bonding that keeps the program together.

I guess, that [evaluation of teachers' language proficiency] has been a concern, and I have relied again on the experts in the district to tell me if the fluency of French is adequate for the Immersion program, or if it isn't.

Last year I went in with the Personnel Officer and the French Language Supervisor and we interviewed all day French-speaking candidates, and again, I could not ascertain whether their French was good, or not. You know, I couldn't do that, the French Supervisor did that, but I could tell again by some of the things that were said in English; some of things they said in French; their general demeanour, you know, you can always, you know, interview; even though it's a minimal amount of French. So, I didn't find that a problem.

Another respondent, Donald, not only relies on his Assistant Principal and/or selected teachers to determine an immersion candidate's French language

proficiency, but also refers to University transcripts and teacher evaluations. As well, if need be, he will find out where and in what language a prospective immersion teacher was educated.

If we go back a few years, we had a lot more applicants that were Francophone, knowing very little English, and in those situations because we would want our teachers to be bilingual and if, they're not bilingual, accommodations were still made, but I would get someone to help me with the interview. Two years ago, we had a Teacher Aide who knew zero English, so I, with the Kindergarten teacher who was going to be the Supervisor, we both interviewed and talked with the person; she would do a lot of the more difficult questions, and almost maybe translating a bit for me if I wasn't understanding what was going on. The situation that we're in now people that have very little English background are being interviewed and are applying for that school situation. There's quite a few opportunities right now because the new Francophone school that the City is going to be opening, so they're going to need someone; teachers. So we're left interviewing and seeing teachers that are completely bilingual so that isn't a problem at all. But, when I want to find out about their French ability, I can look at the record with the University transcript, where they've been educated and [in] what language, and I can also ask someone if I'm concerned about the French language to interview them in French. I might get my Assistant Principal, for example. Or, as I mentioned if it's a Teacher Aide, I will get the teacher that's going to work with him or her to speak in French with them.

Heather talked about how important it was for her to have language proficiency skills evaluated by someone fluent in French since she was unable to judge this for herself.

When hiring teachers, I always have asked someone who is fluent in the language to be the judge of their proficiency in the language before I even interview them. I want to know that because I cannot judge that myself. So, even right from the beginning we called upon people from Faculté St-Jean to help us in that regard. So, we have always checked out language proficiency prior to our own interviews; that is critical as well. For myself, it would be easy for someone to fool me in terms of their proficiency in the language because I could not pick out the fine tuning that I need to.

Faye also relies on others to check immersion teacher candidates' language

skills. She insisted that her board will not hire teachers if there are any problems with the language proficiency.

We wouldn't hire anybody if there was a problem with the language. They're vetoed before they ever hit the field. Well, I don't hire; see we don't hire them.

Evaluation of Teachers with Problems

One respondent, Alan, explained how an administrator with little or no knowledge of French could have difficulties when evaluating a teacher who was experiencing problems in the classroom.

But, let's say, for example, you had a problem teacher. Then you might run into some problems; you know, if you've got good teachers then it doesn't really matter. You can see a good lesson and you know that things are going well. But, suppose you've got a teacher that in the end you've got to get rid of because they just are not a good teacher. The language problem could become paramount there because that teacher can say: Well, if you understood me better and understood what I was doing, you wouldn't be saying these things about me" and, I think, you could run into some real problems there.

Alan and Heather believe that "evaluation can be a problem if there are any "red flags" that go up. When she has doubts about teachers' language proficiency, or pedagogical skills, she brings in other people such as the second language supervisor. She also talked about having had "to clutch every resource possible", such as another teacher, for example, before she had access to the French Supervisor.

If there are any red flags that go up; if there are things that concern me in an evaluation of a teacher, then I feel that I need more information and I need to delve into that teacher's performance more. Then I call our Supervisor, our French Supervisor. I ask that person to go in once or twice, and then sit down and discuss it with me. So, evaluation can be a problem if you do not have access to someone who is fluent in the language, who can evaluate in more depth than you have a problem. I wanted to clear that up. Evaluation can be a problem.

But, as soon as they're in doubt about their language proficiency, or their pedagogical techniques, or approach, that they use in the classroom, then that's when they bring in other people.

Before we had a Supervisor of second languages, of course, we had to clutch every other resource possible. I had one young rookie teacher who, I'm sure, has turned out to be a fine teacher because he had the potential but he was lacking pedagogical strategies, techniques, and he needed help and I had to ask another teacher to come in with me. I set it up with him beforehand and he agreed that he would like the help.

One of the participants in this study, Bob, has access to a central office consultant on whom he can rely when perceiving that teachers are having problems with his "sixth sense". However, he wished his Assistant Principal knew French so not to intimidate the teacher in difficulty with the presence of a central office consultant in the classroom. Bob exemplified his concern with the following case.

if I have a teacher that I'm a little doubtful about, I have my concerns in terms of; first of all he had been assessed by our own Board in terms of competency in French. And, you know the report on him was that he was, his French was very good but I still had one of my teachers; like he was going to be teaching Grade Y. I had another Grade Y teacher sit in with him and speak with him in French for quite a while to get her feeling because, I mean, she's going to have to work with him. And, she felt very comfortable with him. I have taken him and it has turned out to be a pretty good year, but again, I still have those feelings when I go into the room. I would certainly like to be able to understand the French a little better so I could determine his vocabulary; his level of vocabulary with the youngsters. I call consultants in to do this type of thing. And, of course, whenever you bring a stranger into the classroom, it frightens the teacher and they'll be quite different than they will be in the regular setting. I was in rooms every day as much as possible. I'm in every room every day for a short length of time. But, it's, you know, the children. I could walk through the school in a few minutes. We could walk around there and the children wouldn't even notice you; you're with me and it's a standard procedure. People come into the room all the time. But, if he knows it's a consultant from downtown, then he's going to tense up, and, of course, he's going; they're not going to see the same things. So, I would like a member of the administrative team to be the one that checks on that. To see his language level and so

on. I think it's getting better, but I still have that, you know, sixth sense when you're in there that he's, you know, because he's secondary-oriented; he's been a secondary-trained teacher; that he, some of the methodologies that you can see and use, are still maybe not as suitable for these children as it should be. The children love him; the parents love him. So, I've got that on my side. But, I'm still doubtful, you know, I'm still wondering should I, or shouldn't I. And, that's the one type of situation where where if I'm at my, like I understand what he's saying not all of it because that's what bothers me. I'm wondering sometimes now kids seem to be understanding, now they may be putting on a show too because I didn't understand it, and so I get around that a bit. I have the Grade Y teacher that he is working with, she's working in a team area; she's a teacher of such-and-such, as well. So, I've arranged since January while she's in such-and-such, he's only here part-time, eight-tenths. I've increased him two-tenths so she is over on the other side teaching computer while he is teaching her class in French. So, now she's able to keep an eye on him and, you know, confirm what I thought (pause); that there is a problem with the level of language and, of course, now she's working with him.

Evaluating Pedagogical Aspects of Teaching

In terms of evaluating the French immersion teacher's ability to teach, several respondents said that they look for criteria that should be present in the teacher's performance irrespective of the language of instruction. Some principals admitted having difficulty with detecting "nuances" such as the level of questioning. In those cases, they rely on their years of "experience" and on "other signs" such as the classroom discipline, "the feel in the room, the students on task, the student-teacher interactions, the layout of the room", the written long- and short-range lesson plans, and so on. A few principals commented on the fact that they "talk more" to their French immersion teachers "to stay on top of it".

Even in evaluating teachers, I don't find it as difficult because to sit and observe, and over the years, there are certain things that you train yourself to look for and it's no different in either language. Classroom management, for example, teaching techniques; are the children on task; are they interested; are they well motivated; are they responding to the lesson. Those things are really no different. I have no problems judging the long range, or short range planning.

I can read enough French to be able to get by in that area.

The level of questioning. Yes, most certainly, it's difficult to judge that. But, I don't find that is as crucial because you can read the other signs to determine, and when you have one-third of this school in French and two-thirds English, I have, I feel, a very strong French teaching staff and the judgement is there from grade to grade. I certainly have to talk more to my French teachers to stay on top of it.

You can walk; as an Administrator you can walk down the hall; you can walk into a room and you know, after a few years of experience, whether something is going on in that classroom. (Pause) You don't have to spend very many minutes looking at a lesson, or anything else, to know whether something is going on in there. And if there are good things going on, you'll know it. If there a lot of bad things going on, you'll know it too. It could be in Chinese, or any language. You'll know. As far as the classroom conduct is concerned, and as far as lessons, you don't need to know both languages to have a pretty good idea.

Of course, you could go in any language. I could go into a Mandarin Chinese class and take you to evaluate the teacher teaching. I think you, as a teacher, would know whether she's doing a good job or not. You look at the various teaching styles; the feel in the room; the way the children, you see whether they are on task; you know the give and take between teacher and students; you know the layout of the room; everything. There are so many things you can tell just by looking at what's going on in the classroom.

You can see the (pause) positive teaching styles even if you don't understand the language.

Evaluating teachers; I can walk into a classroom and I can see what's happening in the classroom in terms of classroom management. You don't have to speak French to do that. As far as evaluating the French program that is being taught, there are two components. I can see whether the teacher, number one, is motivating children. I can see whether the teacher is asking youngsters to respond in terms of one word answers, sentences; looking at the corrective measures that he, or she, uses when they are doing it, I can see what they're doing in terms of writing. My limited knowledge of French; I can still read what children write and make sense of what they write out of context. So from that perspective, I don't have a problem evaluating teachers.

I found in all of my evaluations, and this is my fifth year in the program, that I have been able to evaluate from Kindergarten to

Grade Six in every subject area even though they're teaching in French. That hasn't been a problem for me because, I think a lot of teacher actions, a lot of the effective teaching can be done exclusive of language. I think that just by watching how the children respond with the discipline, the looking at the planning; a lot of evaluations can be done without even really listening to the language that is being instructed. There are lots of parts in my evaluation that I have to pay particular attention to when I'm looking at teaching strategies. The questioning, the activities, the motivation, the introduction; that I have to pay particular attention. So, I do that. I really key in and try and, you know, do my scripting, I can script in French well enough so that I understand what was being said. So, that hasn't been a problem to date.

In terms of evaluation, you go into a classroom; you learn pretty quickly whether the kids are learning or whether they aren't. Just by the way the classroom is set up; the way the kids are responding; the kinds of activities that they're doing; regardless of the language. So, I haven't had a problem in that way and, I think, that although it would be nice to go into a classroom and be able to understand the language and what was being said. Things like that would be an advantage certainly. But, in my situation, it hasn't caused any problems for me. It hasn't caused any problems for my teachers that I'm aware of, if it has, they haven't shared that with me.

When you have a teacher, whether it be French or English, you still know what is good teaching. You know it. It doesn't break because you're French or English. You know you can still identify and if I have a preconference with this teacher, and I say to the teacher, alright tell me exactly what your lesson plan is; how it's developed and everything else; I watch for these things then. As I said, my knowledge of French is very poor. I can understand when she says: "Aujourd'hui", today we are going to. Or, what have we learned today? You know, I can understand those little things, but you're still looking for general teaching evaluation things such as, is the lesson plan developed; well, you can see that in French or English. Are the children learning; are they responding; what kind of questions is she asking; you know, these types of things all come out. There are one or two things, like discipline; does she have discipline? Are they using other aids, other teaching strategies? Is the lesson plan complete you know, when they're doing the lesson. You know all these things come into play, English or French when you walk in.

It's the little things that you necessarily may, or may not, pick out. For example, the seven parts of a lesson plan. Unless that teacher tells me in the morning, this is what I'm going to do; I'm going to do the introduction, the closure, the teaching, tada tada. Okay, then I can hear that. But, it's the little nuances I wouldn't necessarily pick

out. When you're talking about teaching, general teaching strategies, teaching as itself, I can't see that difference. I've been in my Grade Six class now; I have a French teacher there; I've been in there twice when he's done nothing but speak French and I have evaluated him. And, I did the same thing with my Grade Three teacher. She did some English, but she's very uncomfortable with her English. So, I did a lesson with English and I did a lesson with French. And, you can see the difference. But, teaching style was no different. She was a little bit more animated in the French because that was her language and she was much more comfortable with it. She wasn't that comfortable with the English. So, there was the difference, but I realized that problem. I don't find a problem with it with the teaching; with the evaluations.

One participant, Alan, felt "a void" when evaluating French immersion teachers because he cannot "fully understand what the teacher is trying to do" "all the time". He wished that he had "a lot better grounding in French."

Judging Students' Achievements

Heather was concerned about "having no way of knowing [herself] how successful the children are in learning the language" because of her lack of knowledge of French. Therefore, she must "depend upon the judgement and the expertise of her teachers to make that judgement."

It [the lack of knowledge of the French language] certainly has, but not to the degree that I had anticipated it would. I am very involved with the students individually and with curriculum and those are the areas in which I have been most effective, or more ineffective as a principal in the French immersion program. Number one, I have no way of knowing myself how successful the children are in learning the language because I do not know enough of the language. My ear is not trained adequately for me to be able to judge their oral achievements. So, that has been an area that I have found difficult. I have to depend upon the judgement and the expertise of my teachers to make that judgement, and it's very different from the judgements that I'm able to make in the English program.

Dealing with Curriculum Matters

When dealing with second language curriculum matters, principals are, as Faye put it, "kind of like renaissance people since they have to rely on others" because of their lack of knowledge of French.

I don't speak French very well, so I have to rely on those teachers to help me out. I think administrators in any school have to be kind of like renaissance people. You have to rely on others. How could I possibly know everything that I should have known during all of my administrative career with all these programs. I'd be at university forever, and I would never have the time to experience it all in the classrooms, so I rely on others. I have to. It's not because it's French. Although I wouldn't, you know; it certainly would be handy to speak French. I do speak French, but it's pretty awful. But that's okay.

To keep up with changes in curriculum matters, some principals have unofficially appointed a teacher as the school "French coordinator", or as "unofficial head teacher". These teachers are not given additional income for their services, but rather are allotted extra periods of preparation time, and in some cases, the permission to hire substitute teachers to replace them while they attend workshops or conferences. These teachers are the ones that do "the leg work" for the principals who need to make decisions about curriculum matters. They are the ones who gather information and who make recommendations to the administrators about second language matters. They also act as a liaison between immersion staff members and the principals. Heather commented that she also elects an English Coordinator, but that she "has to be a little sharper and ask a lot more questions" to the French Coordinator.

I have appointed a French coordinator and I use her everyday. She is a teacher, but she is the Coordinator for the school. So, anything that comes through that has anything at all to do with the program, I pass onto my Coordinator and we discuss it and she's very good because she will translate and she will tell me exactly. And, then she

gives her opinion and then I make the decision, discuss it with the rest of the teachers, pass it on to whomever it concerns and that works very well. But, again there is a dependency, and yet, sometimes, that works to my advantage. I feel that running a school has to be a team project, and so I have my team working with me and the Coordinators touch base with all of the other teachers, and I really feel that the teachers feel that they are a part of that decision-making process and that's very important to me; to operate as a team. I always tell them that when I cannot afford to have the wrong decision made, I will make it myself and they will not be asked to participate. So, they understand that they're not asked to participate in every decision that is made, but they have enough input through this process that I really feel that I have a strong commitment from them to what we are trying to do.

I meet individually with the Coordinators and they do a lot of what could be termed the "leg work" for me. The running back and forth. And the liaison with every other staff member. So, it works equally well in French as it does in English. It's just that I have to be a little sharper and ask a lot more questions. Yes, she is my Grade Two teacher and I with my Coordinators; I give them some periods off through the week as preps in lieu of this extra, or added, responsibility that they are given.

What I found I've been doing in the schools, for example, this present school; my Assistant Principal is not French speaking either, or Ukrainian. And, what I do is I have unofficial program heads, they are, you know, they help look after the ordering of materials. In this school, my French Teacher E is the Resource Room Teacher, she takes the leadership role in the school. I do give her some time to do that in, I can call in a substitute when she has to do particular things. So, she is, in essence, my Resource Person in the French immersion program. I have a similar person in the Ukrainian bilingual program. And, I find you have to call upon them, you know, if you were not familiar enough with the language. You naturally have to call upon the expert people you have in the school.

Donald does not appoint a teacher to be responsible for the program, but still sends for the Assistant Principals who know the French language to conferences concerning the second language programs. He also relies heavily on consultants from central office for their expertise on curriculum matters.

One of the other things is a few conferences have been, let's say, there in the French language and I can perceive that there be a difficulty beforehand, I might send my Assistant Principal or another

teacher. I can think of, let's see now, I've gotta think; let's say a speaker is coming in from Québec and they were speaking on a topic that pertained to Français 1, 2, 3. I would send maybe a Grade One, Two or Three teacher and then have them come back and share that information with us rather than having me go in and sharing it again. I have done a few things like that, not many.

One area, it hasn't been a concern, but I think it might be to some smaller school jurisdictions; we have the luxury, of course, in the big system in having our consultants when we're trying to evaluate text for curriculum; when we're trying to give in-services and things like that. We can use and draw from their expertise. That's their job; that's their role. So, when we're doing, this new French Language Arts text that we're using and for its implementation, there's lots of seminars and visits, but that's our consultants job to come and teach and explain the program and go through the seminars and the in-servicing so in a small jurisdiction if the Principal had to do that, I think that would be something of a difficulty for them. In our school system it's not a problem. The opposite happens as far as the consultants go. Our consultants are responsible for the subject area and that person is responsible for, there's two people, but let's say the elementary Math person is responsible for all of the Math in all of the language programs. The person that is in Math right now has no knowledge, or very little French, Ukrainian, Cree, Polish, but is knowledgeable in Math so when they come out and do in-services, it's in English. In small jurisdictions I can see where that would be a difficult area; when you have to use the French text, the Principal you know. Who has the time to do the investigating of the curriculum; how it matches the Alberta Government's requirements, objectives and requirements; trying to match up and looking for things; it might be, could be difficult. Probably have to seek some outside help, or get a teacher to come in and supply a substitute teacher sometime to be able to sit down and do that. In our system that hasn't been a difficult area.

Alan talked with regret about having relied too heavily upon an "unofficial head teacher" in the past. He has since recognized the need for the principal to take full ownership of the French immersion program, although he may rely on an "unofficial head to assist him from time to time."

When the French immersion, what happens French immersion was pushed onto School A very quickly and I didn't resent that; that was fine. I didn't mind that at all, but the idea was I was under the impression that Teacher B knew how to run a French immersion Program and I really didn't have to worry about it. And, that was

wrong; that wasn't her job to run it. I think it was a great disservice to me too, and that was kind of, I think, central board, central office did this in a hurry to get this out of their hair and she and I have both suffered because of that; she, in particular, and I think that was most unfortunate that I even had to; that I should even assume that she was going to run the French immersion Program. She had all she could do teaching her own class. She didn't need to be running the French immersion and, of course, that's what she'd been doing for a number of years at a previous school.

Communicating In French

Donald, who knows a moderate amount of French, talked about resorting to his Assistant Principal who knows French to help him out on the phone when dealing with French speaking suppliers of books and materials. He explained why he experiences difficulties over the phone despite his moderate level of French.

Usually on the phone, I can understand coming in the door. Usually when you see facial expressions you get a lot more meaning, and I find the phone difficult to use because you can't see the facial and the hand signals and things like that. They can't see my response either. When we're talking now you can tell if I understand if I have a puzzled face, or whatever. On the phone, that's a difficult situation. That would be the main area and other situations haven't arisen.

Bob also relies on staff members to assist him when dealing with some Francophone parents.

Certainly we do have some Francophone parents who can speak no English. In a situation like that, I have to have somebody in the office who can speak in French. One of the secretaries is French speaking. In the previous school you always had somebody around the office who was French speaking. You know you can get around it that way. In the previous school I had my assistant. I always had my French-speaking assistant, except for one year.

When receiving or sending correspondence in French, Faye and Gail ask their Francophone Immersion teachers for assistance. Faye will not send correspondence out in French unless "[she] knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that the person that has written has no English." Gail asks Francophone teachers

for help to confirm or deny her comprehension of letters.

When I get letters in French only, I can read the letter and I get the general idea, but if it's really specific, I have to ask the French teachers to tell me what this means. I've got an idea, but I think it's more than what I'm thinking and it usually is.

Heather feels that she "has to rely entirely upon her [immersion] teachers to choose resource materials and to judge their quality." She does, however, sit down with them to discuss issues pertaining to the curriculum materials such as the methodologies, but she finds the process very time consuming."

In curriculum I read French a little, but I am not competent enough even at reading it to be able to judge the quality of the curriculum materials that they're using. I have to rely entirely upon my teachers to choose resource materials and to judge the quality of them. Often times, I will sit with one of the French teachers and ask them to translate and we discuss the methodologies and so on. But, it's very, very time consuming.

Like Heather, Gail finds the ordering of materials time consuming, not because she sits down with teachers to talk about the resources, but because she feels that her secretaries and herself have to take their time to find out exactly what to order based on the curriculum guides.

When we have to order in French, now usually we can do that because it's pretty well outlined what the curriculum demands and you can go word for word; that type of thing. Basically, that would be one thing, but we've overcome it; we've just simply taken our time with it and I don't know this is for Grade Two, or Grade Three unless I look exactly at my curriculum guide, then I can follow it.

Participants in this study indicated that they rely on others to assist them in communicating in French with non-English speaking people. Those whom they depend upon may vary from the Assistant Principal and/or the school secretary, if they possess a knowledge of the French language, to the immersion teachers and central office consultants.

Concerns

These ranged from appropriate learning materials and lack of qualified teachers to specific student concerns.

Availability of Print and Non-Print Resources

Of great concern to several respondents was the lack of availability of print and non-print resources. These resources include program of studies materials, curriculum guidelines, library books, standardized tests, diagnostic tests, special materials for students with learning difficulties and others.

Corey explained how difficult and frustrating it was for French immersion teachers to cope with having to translate updated English materials to enable them to teach the same concepts to their immersion students.

I think one of the more frustrating things is the availability of print and non-print resources. Example, Grade 8 Junior High Math program gets revised and the French program books are available a year and a half later. In the meantime, the teachers you know feel that they have to teach to the objectives of the new program and yet they don't have any program materials to teach from, that's the frustration. It's hard for teachers to cope with those kinds of situations and so you see teachers struggling, translating for themselves so that they can expose their youngsters to the same program as the English program youngsters get. But I know our Math teachers in Junior High are very frustrated because they are teaching the old "program" and the English (staff) is teaching the new program, teaching to the new objectives. You know, I think that's the most critical thing for me.

Heather who has the same concerns as Corey pointed out that materials that are available in French have been developed for Francophone students and therefore are not suitable for French immersion children.

I believe that is an issue and a concern is the lack of back up and resource materials, particularly in standardized testing, diagnostic testing, special materials for children who have learning disabilities or learning difficulties, which is different from a disability because children in the French immersion program are no different than

English. They do have difficulties sometimes. So we still have to do a lot of our own translating, we still have to make a lot of our own materials, that's terribly time consuming. Many of the materials as you know that are available have been developed for Francophone children and they're not suitable, not appropriate at all for the kind of children that we're dealing with.

Corey commented on the fact that French books are more expensive, not as well bound as English ones and seem to need replacing at a greater rate than English books. He stated that "that is one of the problems we face but I don't know what the answer is."

Although Faye can get access to extra monies needed for resources from the second language supervisor, she believes that "You have to get your own act together and make your orders for library" to make the most out of it.

Despite the lack of availability of print and non-print resources, Heather was optimistic in saying that this situation "has become better over the years and I think [that] we are almost in a catch-up mode."

Curriculum has been a major problem all the way through, it's much, much better now and it becomes better every year as the program grows. So those issues have been major concerns over the years. I mean textbook materials, curriculum has also been a problem though. When we started out, none of the programs of study, none of the curriculum guides that we were relying on were printed in French. It has become better over the years and I think we are almost in a catch-up mode. We have almost caught up to our needs, but it has been a struggle one way and another all the way through.

Availability of French Immersion Teachers

Another critical concern for many respondents was the lack of availability of French immersion teachers within the Province of Alberta. Because "we don't generate enough of our own [teachers] at the provincial level", school boards are forced to hire teachers from other parts of the world, namely Québec, Ontario and

New Brunswick due to the high demand for immersion teachers in Alberta. Problems associated with importing teachers to Alberta and/or with hiring at the last minute are the following: (a) Francophone teachers are not familiar with the community and school expectations, and have a limited knowledge of English; (b) They are suddenly faced with a "whole change of lifestyle, a whole change in expectations", and get homesick hence, the sometimes high rate of turnover of French immersion teachers; (c) Because, as Ed said, some school boards "have to scramble and eventually come up with somebody", they "have had to put people whose understanding of the French language is not what they would prefer in the immersion program just because the demand is so high and the number of qualified applicants aren't there". Bob commented also: "We're forced to take teachers in our Immersion programs just simply because of the demand. We're forced to take teachers in our Immersion program whose level of French maybe is not where we would like it to be;" (d) "Another thing is you don't meet these teachers sometimes because they are either in Québec or you give them a telephone interview, or you need them right away and then you get them the first day of school of the first week when we're back."

Other related concerns for Principals Corey and Ed are that "parents in springtime are wanting to know who their children's teacher is going to be" and that "parents say well how can you let a good teacher get away?", a question to which Corey responds: "We tried everything we could other than marrying her off" when referring to female teachers!

Language Versus Pedagogical Skills

Because of the high demand for and the lack of availability of qualified

French immersion teachers, some principals are torn with having to choose between a teacher whose French language proficiency is "somewhat suspect" and one who has sound pedagogical skills or vice-versa.

Principals Bob and Donald both shared the view that they would rather have a good teacher than have "someone come in who is just good in language" because according to their philosophy, teaching requires working well with children.

And I look at that also when I'm hiring. I think I would rather have someone who is a good teacher than having someone come in who's just good in language, because I think teaching is especially working with the little kids, there's a lot more care and attention, concern, patience, love, understanding this is needed in a person to do, to be a good teacher than to have straight A's, a good transcript in the French language. So I'd rather have someone who maybe stumbles a little bit with the French but is a good teacher than have the opposite.

Bob who had a strong reaction from the Francophone teachers on staff explained his point to them.

But I mean she knows her French, it's not that high and I had a reaction, funny I had a reaction from some of the Francophones that I shouldn't have hired her and they really felt strongly about it and I just told them, look there's no one else and personally I would sooner have a teacher who has excellent teaching skills, but whose maybe the little language skills is a little suspect than somebody whose language skills are excellent but they can't work with kids. You know and that's my philosophy.

Principals Corey and Faye took the opposite view, Corey was firm in his belief that "if you want to destroy a program, all you have to do is hire a person who does not have the proper language skills."

Okay, if she had very suspicious language skills, I would go with the one that had the language skills. And then try and work on that person to become a team player. But if you want to destroy a program, all you have to do is hire a person that doesn't have the proper language skills and the kids are going to get turned off,

parents are going to get turned off and it's just not a positive situation. I had that in one school and it started to turn people off. You can't afford that. It's a struggle enough to keep language programs going even though we have growing enrolments, but you do have people getting disenchanted and leaving and we don't like to see people leave language programs.

Faye was adamant in saying that her school board would not hire teachers whose French skills were not adequate. She made the following remark:

So the selection criterias are really strict. And I will not have, I don't know how other administrators feel, but there's no way somebody would give me somebody that wasn't suited cause I'd raise hell with them. Not the teacher's fault. I won't have a Junior High teacher, I don't care how good their French is, teaching in Elementary.

Some principals feel that they get around this issue by "saving the Francophones for Division II."

Unilingual Francophone Teachers

A few respondents alluded to some problems that they must face because some of their Francophone teachers have little or no knowledge of English when they first come to Alberta. These principals have found themselves having to assist teachers with reading resources printed in English and writing comments in report cards that are read by Anglophone parents. One of the respondents, Faye, also recognized the difficulties experienced by Francophone teachers who must somehow communicate with Anglophone parents during parent-teacher interviews. Gail mentioned the "wingle-wangle" that she must do with timetabling when assigning teachers to teach English Language Arts to the French immersion Grades Two to Six classes.

Although hiring strictly French-speaking teachers poses problems, Gail explained why her school board continues to do so.

And yet our parents seem to demand that, they want good speaking

French teachers. They do not want you know some that have the accent or some that don't have the accent, or someone that learned it you know, they want their native language to be French so that there is a real good language base and our parents have almost said we don't care, as long as the language is there. And that has posed some types of problems too.

Transferring French Immersion Students to the English Program

Gail elaborated quite a bit about the problem of having parents who were not totally committed to the program take their child out of the Immersion program at any time for any given reason. To resolve this problem, she finally ask parents who were going to put their children in the French immersion program for a three-year commitment on their part, i.e., she will only allow transfer of a child after Grade Three if the child is still experiencing difficulties.

So I just put my foot down and said this is it. You're not doing your child any good, you're not doing anybody any good, so you make a commitment for three years, I'm not moving your child out unless it's under exceptional circumstances. And pretty well since then, that's the way it's been. It's no longer like I'm just going to put my kid in for a little while because it's the thing to do, no. You make the commitment.

Same Students Together for Six Years

Gail was concerned about the fact that the same group of students were together for at least six years in schools that only had one class of French immersion students at each grade level. She noticed that French immersion students "don't interact well with the other children in the upper grades."

Advice

Respondents in the study were asked what advice they would give to incoming Anglophone administrators of French immersion programs. Some suggestions were common to several respondents whereas other comments were

unique to each individual.

Nothing Replaces Experience

Despite the growing availability of workshops for beginning versus experienced anglophone administrators of French immersion programs, many respondents in this study have pointed out the value of personal experience and of experiences of others over and above that of workshops although they have also found these worthwhile in some respects.

Heather elaborated on why she feels that "there is nothing that can take the place of experience."

Workshops provide for common problems and discussion in large groups can be dealt with, you know you can deal with the common problems, the everyday problems that everybody faces. And I don't discount the value of workshops, although I have to tell you that I have attended many workshops that fell short of what they were supposed to provide and some, the reason for that may be because in the very early years in which I was involved in this program, we didn't really know what the problems were that we might face, it's difficult to anticipate if you have no experience to base that on. So you can't predict and then prevent.

It was difficult in the early years. Now it's very easy and I know that it seems easier to me because of the experiences that I have had. You know some things we can take as many classes as are offered, we can have credentials that look wonderful, but there is nothing that can take the place of experience.

Faye also supported Heather's view when she observed that she has gained more knowledge with an on-the-job training than if she had gone to University to learn about the administration of French immersion programs.

I've learned a lot, I've learned more through this program that I ever would have learned at University. I would never start it again, I would help somebody start it, like from what I have learned. So you don't fall in these traps and think I oh, I should have known that. You can't read about it you see, you have to go and find out as you're doing it.

Another principal, Bob, told me about having to learn the hard way i.e., through trial and error.

You know and I'll look at myself as being a fairly experienced Administrator and when I look back on that first year [of administering a French immersion program], I can't believe that I made such a mess of things you know. If someone would have told me well you're going to screw up I would have said "never" cause I don't screw up, but it happened and as I said that it will never happen again.

Most of the participants in this study highlighted the benefits of learning from experiences of others and in particular of other principals. Ed put it in the following manner:

And I think a lot of that may have to do with the fact we started and we can work. We were in control and we were aware of past experiences of other people and did some groundwork to see that those kinds of problems didn't develop. That's not to say that they might not down the road somewhere, but I think as the years go on you still have to work through it to make sure that you work together for the best of all of the children.

Several respondents would advise incoming principals of French immersion programs to cultivate personal interactions with administrators who are experienced with French immersion. Once again, the personal interactions through informal meetings, phone calls or intervisitations were considered to be more valuable than attending workshops.

I attended every workshop that I could possibly go to for many years. Our system was generous, they provided time and money to us to go and that was very helpful. Although I think the personal interactions I had were more helpful. When you go to a workshop you are dealing in generalities, when you have people, individuals, upon whom you can call, you are dealing in specifics.

I have made contacts with principals of Immersion programs in another school jurisdiction and as a matter of fact, when the program first started, I went many, many times to a school in a large school jurisdiction where an Anglophone was the principal of an Immersion program. He was wonderful to me and I felt after going many times,

I could pick up the telephone and say: "So-and-so I have a problem. What did you do or have you ever had this problem?"

What helped me too in my first year was a network of Principals too. The group of people that we have as Administrators in our school system are very good and are very open. And willing to share and help you out as much as they can. We meet regularly, informally and formally, through time and that has helped and the help being in areas that are related to teaching and administering you know, what do you do if, I've got this situation can help you help me you know. They provide a lot of help in that way.

Well I think that a couple of things and that is to, to seek out the advice and experience of others in the district, other principals who have been involved in Immersion programs. Spend a lot of time talking to them about their programs, the concerns that they've experienced and lean heavily on their advice because I had done that and I found that it paid off for me in terms of setting up the program and getting it going. There were a lot of things that I probably wouldn't have thought of doing and was able to think about them and implement them to make the transition into the school a very smooth one and a very comfortable one, for the students and their parents; to make them feel welcome and a part of a whole school philosophy rather than just a program in a certain building. So that's the advice that I would give them.

Yeah, they were, they were formal/informal. Colleagues, you know there were several meetings that we had with district personnel and I did several intervisitations and visited classrooms and spoke to teachers in other programs and just kind of got a feeling for what happens, the kinds of, kinds of academic programming that was being offered but also the kind of co-curricular program that was offered in the school as well.

And I would hope that they would have time to do that and that they would have time to visit other systems and speak to people that are running the programs. Now we have, in my view, quite a good arrangement for, we had people come to visit in the classroom. Nobody ever came to visit me. And I didn't mind, I mean fine if they don't want to come, but they could have learned a great deal. Well yes, if there would be the time. Now we have attended also these big meetings that they have every year with ACPI where they have a pre-session for administrators and I've been to two of those, one in Montreal and one here, but they get different people coming to those same things every year and so they have to have sessions that are pretty much the same.

They could have said that a year and one-half before that this is the

plan and this is what's going to happen so we're going to send you away and you better go and find out some things. As I say I was so astounded when I went to a larger school jurisdiction and I talked to, you know during the course of that year or the following year, particularly during the year I talked to people in another school jurisdiction, I have a lot of principal friends there and they had all gone through the same experience that I had gone through, with problems with parents and getting the French immersion program. All I would have had to do was spend a day with them and I would have been three times as wise without any problem.

One of the things that I've found was a great disadvantage to me and I didn't know this until after I'd gone through the year, was I would have done well to go to one of the other schools and spent a week or so that had French immersion because I've learned now that schools that began in French immersion all had about the same problems, pressure from the parents, problems with whether there be problems on the staff or just trying to get things sorted out.

Having people like that are really very, very important because the principal of an individual school often has to stand alone and if you have a group of other administrators, often whom you can just call and talk about a problem to, it's very helpful, it's critical.

Bob mentioned that after having gained personal experience and having learned from others, he is now in a position to share his experiences as a French immersion principal and has been asked to conduct workshops for new administrators of the second language program.

I've also been asked to speak at some of them too. You know it was a very easy session, it was one where I was a resource person and there was another gentleman from another large school jurisdiction in Alberta as a resource person and we talked about common problems and some of the same things we've talked about, how do I as an Anglophone Administrator meet the needs of the French immersion program.

Building a Network of Resource People

Some principal's advice to incoming principals was to "make sure" that you build a network of resource people, be they central office personnel, second language supervisors, teachers and others who are willing to help the principal

cope with his "human or academic deficiencies".

And I don't believe that it is impossible for an English-speaking principal to be an Administrator of an Immersion program providing you are able and have access to resource people to come in and help you in areas where you are weak.

You know and then the other thing is I guess going into the new school is, is make sure that you've got teachers that can and are willing to help you because the new principal is going to have deficiencies, human ones or academic ones, whatever. See that those people can help you out. If it's a language problem, find some people that can help you out in those areas to do translations, to be available to meet people, to answer their questions on the phone or whatever. And if you can, I think if you can do those things the life of the new Immersion principal will become easier and I guess you'll end up with a better school because of it.

Also to lean heavily on the Central Office personnel who have had experience in setting up programs and take their advice as well.

It's one of the first times I ever really understood the importance of the philosophical base of leadership that you make a difference if you speak in broad terms, pedagogical terms and meet with people who don't understand the program. You see there are people in schools and people in the community who don't understand the program, and I can tell you the truth, I didn't understand it myself at first, but I had a very good English staff, a corrective reading person who was superb and we met many times before we put the program [French immersion] into place to determine how it was that children learn language, but we never did figure out, because I couldn't remember how I learned to talk or to read. On the other hand the discussions, because she was trained in a different way than I was, helped both of us determine what it was we needed to do in order for children to learn a second language. So I was lucky that way, we were lucky in the school.

Increasing One's Knowledge of the Program

A few of the respondents did not ignore the value of research when beginning to administer a second language program. They stressed the importance of contacting researchers about French immersion programs and reading research articles to become more knowledgeable about the program.

Faye found it to be especially useful when trying "to assure parents who [are] scared out of their tree that this program would work".

Initially, when the Central Office person, so and so, but a superb educational statesman in my opinion, Deputy Super, we were going to offer the program here and he did a lot of reading, so did I that first summer, cause I didn't think, how you know. I had to be able to assure parents who were scared out of their tree that this program would work and I didn't know it would work.

I mean we got a lot of research articles and then we would have a lot of meetings and you know and you talk to the parents about this but if they were worried then you'd start taking out these research articles, cause what else, we didn't have anything else to go on.

But then I talked to the second languages program supervisor. And he is one that really convinced me, he's one of the ones, he spent a lot of time with me and telling me about bilingual programs. He's the one that arranged for me to hear so-and-so [a researcher of French immersion programs] and meet with him. Of course so-and-so was out at our school doing research and just in my dealings with so-and-so it really, you know it really made a difference. I don't know if you've met him personally, he's a very personable fellow.

Increasing One's Knowledge of French

Many interviewees mentioned that they have taken courses that would help them increase their conversational skills in the French language. They also described how difficult and frustrating it was for them to learn a second language. Although several respondents were not satisfied with their progress, they did show some satisfaction at making an effort to learn French. They felt that immersion teachers would appreciate the principal's effort in trying to communicate in French. They also said that after their second language learning experience, they could better empathize with students who were placed in a French immersion program. Donald, who at first had a limited knowledge of French and who administers a French immersion program, reported that taking second language courses

facilitated his work.

One of the first things I guess I'd have to see what the size of the school is. In most cases, a new Administrator in a French immersion is going to go into a small school. They're going to have to do a lot of teaching. So I think having a stronger background in French since you're able, cause you have to do more teaching, the smaller the school the more teaching you have to do, the better off you're going to be. Ah, the Jonquieres experience was very good for myself, I think continuing on programs like that, I did, I took the continuing ed programs that they offer, a couple more of those. Those things increase your knowledge in French and I guess at first the verbal, work at that. And then go into writing and the reading, well the reading seems to come with the writing, but get to know more French. You open, I guess it makes it easier. That wasn't as much a problem as I mentioned before for me as maybe someone with zero French.

Hiring a Bilingual Principal or Assistant Principal

Two principals, Bob and Donald, mentioned that if given a choice, they would hire an assistant principal who had a good working knowledge of French.

And for example at School D I had so-and-so for years as principal of School E and he is French-speaking and of course it made for a good team. I think it's you know probably if possible, one member of the administrative team should be on the target language. So I think it would be a good, really a good thing that one member of the administrative team be French-speaking in a large French immersion school.

That's one of the things that I felt that I would require when I was looking for an Assistant Principal. Someone that is fluently bilingual so that if I got into any situation that I wouldn't be able to handle that I would have a backup.

Handling Conflict Smoothly

A number of principals stressed the importance of dealing with conflicts related to the French immersion program which may arise in the community or within staff members to maintain and/or promote a "positive school climate". Heather in particular pointed out that if "administrators try to overlook those

problems they don't go away, they become bigger." She explained her view on two occasions.

That these are people from our own communities, they are your neighbours and mine, maybe they're not in our own school district but they support our school activities in the same way, their money is no different, their life is no different but it's there Nicole and it has to be dealt with and if an administrator tries to overlook those problems they don't go away, they become bigger.

I would talk about public relations, I would talk about using interpersonal skills, I think they're vital. I think that if you deal with your public relations, you're trying to minimize problems that you are going to have outside the school. I think if you use your interpersonal skills to deal with your staff, you are going to minimize the problems that you will have among the staff. Once those things are taken care of, then you can really get down to the business of what school is all about. But if you have those other influences sort of eating away at the basic core, the fabric of the school situation, it certainly detracts from the job that we're paid to do and that's teach children and provide an educational setting for them. I am a very strong believer in having a positive school climate. I think that if you have that going for you, you have a better chance to be successful in providing a good educational program because if the people are happy with what they're doing and where they are working, they will always give that much more to their job. So they'll give the extra mile. So I would say to a new person be very aware of your community and of your staff and then you can start working on your curriculum and your long-term objectives.

Gail would also advise principals to "really look at the dynamics of the staff room, the dynamics of the teachers."

Faye for her part talked about "being careful" about "selling the program" because of the "backlash" in the community still being present. She elaborated in the following way:

We're careful. The French immersion program is a big success, I mean when we get the results in from the, the standardized tests that we give we don't, we know when we go over them, the kids in the older grades in the French immersion generally speaking do at least as well if not better than their contemporaries in the English program, and they've written the programs in English, we don't blurt that out all over the community. They're still the backlash you know.

But we certainly tell parents that are coming in who are interested in enrolling their children in French immersion when they ask well what about the English. We tell them what we know and what research says.

Gail also suggested that it was important to monitor the parent group so that conflicts did not arise.

He/she [the administrator] better keep his eyes and ears open and he better have his thumb right on the heart beat of that organization. I make it a point to go to all of these meetings okay and I'm there if something comes up. I say well I'm sorry you cannot do that, that is not feasible, you will do this. Now they have done some lobbying yes.

Dealing with Parents

Reassuring parents.

Some respondents' advice to incoming principals was for them to be willing to spend time with parents to do the "show and tell" of the immersion program at their schools in order to ease the minds of parents who are considering placing their children in the second language program. These "show and tell" sessions can be done with individual parents or with a group of parents.

Okay, I think a couple of things that were important was doing some things, meetings, coffee get togethers, inviting the parents into the school prior to their children arriving, having meetings with them, establishing that rapport, explaining to them what the philosophy of the school was generally, reassuring them that their kids would be cared for and that the program that they would be getting would be first rate. And I think that kind of ground work I sent out several, several letters explaining to parents what was happening, invited them to a number of meetings and had very good turnouts, answered their questions, answered their concerns, brought in as I said district personnel in terms of, of consultants and also people from accommodation, program accommodation, who would, would be there to answer concerns that I didn't know anything about like why this school and not that school and, and those kinds of questions. Just to make, to make parents comfortable with the, the decision that had been made, to make them feel welcome, and to, to dispel any fears they might have had ah because there were, there were a lot of them and ah once we did that, once we explain our position, we

explained our philosophy, shared with them what we were going to do then a lot of the questions that they brought with them were answered in those kinds of talks and discussions.

And you have to be willing in this kind of a program to answer all sorts of parental questions because this is scary for some of them that are bringing their children in for the first time, they don't know what they're doing. And you have to be, like we also have people that phone up and say I'd like to talk to somebody about the French immersion Kindergarten or whatever grade in its progression. And we bring them into the school if they want to come. They can see the evolution of this program for six years, Kindergarten to Grade Five, now initially we couldn't do that. But once we could, I mean it was a miracle program to me when I saw it and they can see that too.

Telling the truth.

Both Faye and Gail advised principals to be honest with parents and "to make [them] aware that children can fail [in] French as well as they can in English."

I think you have to make parents aware and the principal aware that children can fail in French as well as they can in English. You know like they seem to think that my child has to fail, oh my gosh, well in English there might not have been a problem, why is it a problem in French.

The only child that I wouldn't take into the program, and this is another sticker you see, people say oh well we should counsel them out because they're not doing very well. Well, this is a program of parental choice and those kids have a right to two languages. Now I'm sure there are children in France that are slow learners, but they still have to take English and they take their languages, whatever they are, and learn them to whatever level they're capable of learning them to. We have also found that with youngsters that are having difficulty, it's never the language. It's some other kind of short circuit that we can remediate. And in Division 1 with the little kids, if you're going to remediate, you remediate the mother tongue. And if the parents, I don't think you should counsel the parents to pull kids out, I think you have to tell the parents the truth.

Gail warns parents about the frustration that their children and/or themselves might experience when they first begin the program. She tells them

not to put their children in the program if they themselves cannot handle it. She explained:

I made some, you know at the beginning there we had as I said the parents, you see this is a new thing, well woooopee de, we're going to go in this French and well all the kids are very frustrated in Grade One until they reach January, I mean they'll give you every excuse in the book not to go to school. You know, the teacher yells, the teacher hits, the school's miserable, horrible, and yet when they get there they're happy as a lark. And parents if you can't take that, you know you got to just have a deaf ear about you, and then January rolls around, yeah they're fine. And I tell parents that if you can't handle that, don't put your child in.

This notion of commitment which is very important to Faye and Gail is related to parents from the start. Faye will even discourage couples from placing their children in French immersion programs if one of the parents is "against" this mode of instruction.

Well first of all I think you have to understand to make parents understand, that it's a commitment on their part, it's not one of these fly-by-nighters or the going thing, it's a commitment, it has to be a commitment for at least three years until their English language has developed, otherwise it means repeating a grade. I think you also have to realize that there is going to be problems in the French like there are in the English, but I think you have to look at the end result and I think you have to let parents be aware that French is not the problem language, you know because many parents are very eager to say well it's French you know and I would say you know nine times out of ten no.

But if they're not committed to having their child be bilingual then if one of the parents is for it, the other against it, I'm not interested in taking their kids. Well I tell them, I mean don't do that to your child or your family.

Gail even asks parents for their commitment in writing.

Like usually in Kindergarten we talk about it and I give them names of people that they can contact, the parents that have had kids in French, because they have the questions and then the other thing I do is I write every Kindergarten child in French immersion in the Kindergarten this letter that states now is the time that you have to make this commitment, okay either your child goes into Grade One

[French immersion] or your child doesn't. Because I will not transfer them out unless I mean I have you know a parent in her just balling her head off and saying I can't stand it. But then that child has to go into Grade One and has to repeat almost his/her Grade One. Even in October, they've already missed two months of English. You know some kids can't catch that up, they just can't. You know think of what you're doing to your child. So I've not had, I've had very few. Yes and that's why I say it will be only under drastic circumstances and I put that right in the letter, that it will be only under really severe circumstances.

Getting Rid of One's Biases

Faye's advice to incoming anglophone principals of French immersion programs was given in a roundabout way. Nevertheless her message was clear: present and future administrators "have to think in a slightly twisted way, in a different approach, have to get rid of things that you always sort of assumed." She elaborated quite at length about this, using as examples the "student who is a little slow" and "kids whose mother tongue isn't English."

But if you have a bias and boy don't we all have biases and you think that a big dose of English will solve the problem, you're wrong. And if you're an educator, you should know better. A slow student, a student who is a little slow, as an adult may have a big advantage if he has two languages over a brilliant person that is monolingual. So it's, you see this is the family thing, they don't have any choice with English, but in this, there is a choice and you have to work together and you have to be prepared to give up a lot of time to, to work with families. Sure kids leave the program for a variety of reasons, but there's research that shows you what happens to those too. Whether they have a tough time, or a good time or whatever it is once they're pulled out because there is a sense of failure I'm sure in those children that are pulled out. And administrators, counsellors, remedial reading people, they don't have a right to say well your child isn't doing very well in French so I think he should be pulled out. The kid isn't doing very well in English either, but that doesn't mean their minds can't be stretched to the limit of their ability in two languages. They still end up in two languages. The writing's tough, the writing's tough in English, the writing's tough in French, the writing's tough.

But I mean, and the other thing is we know very well that for a child to have good luck in a second-language program, it's really great if

they've got a wonderful foundation in their mother tongue. But we have kids here whose mother tongue is not English, and this has been mistaken. They say well, gosh the English is so weak, well I, but I said but their first tongue is Mandarin. It's probably fine. So we have to get Kindergarten aides in to help them with their English a little bit, but they're still going to go into French Kindergarten and by Joe, those kids are well on their way to being trilingual. Firm foundation in mother tongue doesn't mean firm foundation in English, which is another mistake that people have made in the past and we've got all sorts of kids coming into the Kindergarten. So that's another thing I would have. You know you have to think in a slightly twisted way, in a different approach. I don't know as, I don't think it's twisted, I just think you have to get rid of some things that you always sort of assumed or meant, they don't necessarily mean that at all.

Working with French Immersion Teachers

Support teachers or watch them burnout.

Faye advised new principals to show "plenty of [professional] support" towards their French immersion teachers, lest the risk of them "burn[ing] out fast". She attributed this high burnout rate both to the demands of the job and the various difficulties that they encounter because they are French.

And I've met teachers and helped teachers that are so tremendously creative because they have to be with this program and one of the other things that you have to remember as an Administrator of this program is that the burnout rate, you have to really watch these people maintain your own sense of humour and because they burn out fast. This is not a program that you fool around with and they need plenty of support, plenty of support because they're often criticized if the children aren't doing very well and that isn't their fault and sometimes they have trouble because they are French.

Having teachers respect proper channels of authority.

Based on some of the incidents that Gail experienced with Francophone immersion teachers from Québec, she would advise new principals to inform them from the start about procedures and following proper channels of authority because they may differ from those in Québec.

You need good teachers. I have had one or two teachers who have

come from Québec and who are almost, not militant, but they seem to think that if I don't tell them yes you may do this, they say well I'll just go and see so-and-so, like higher up, but you won't, you know you come through me first. Whereas they don't come to you first, they go higher up first and then I find out that, you know, so it's like if I don't get what I want in this school, I can go to so-and-so here instead of saying here's where I go first. That realness of that line of whatever you want to call it, they don't seem to respect that. I said I don't know whether it's because Québec from what I've gathered is known for maybe being a little bit more militant in its teachers association and maybe they don't have that line of duration going on. I kept saying to our Supervisor when you get these guys from Québec sit them down and tell them they're not in Québec okay, they're in Alberta. And here in Alberta you go from teacher to principal and that's it. And if the principals says no I'm sorry we cannot do this for you, then that's the way it is.

But they come in you know with that attitude like hey you know, and you shoot them down right off the shot, but they don't like you for it. You know it's like hey you know, "What are you doing to me?" But that's why I said to the Language Arts, the Language Supervisor, I said: "Look you get these guys together at an orientation and you take the French apart and you say to them look you are not in Québec, here is the line and this is the way you go. The principal is in charge. And you do not go over the principal", but three years ago, I had a few that decided they would go over the principal and just do their own thing until I had to say "No, you don't. You go through me first. I'll give you permission. Don't do this on your own."

Acknowledging program needs.

Alan and Faye's advice to administrators was to "pay attention to [the needs of the program]." Faye did not see the French immersion program as being "an educational pain in the butt" anymore than other special programs that have put in place in Alberta in the past. She does not think that special equipment and materials such as tape recorders, computer software and so on should be neglected.

And all the sorts of things to make it proper for what it is you're trying to do. Now this in my view is not an educational pain in the butt because in Alberta we've done sorts of special programs for years and years and years where you had to have special stuff. Like the

special education programs, the challenge programs, you had to have, it's true they had to be in English, but tape recorders are no big deal. Our computers are no big deal, learning the software is a toughy cause you'd likely waste money and buy stuff that isn't any good. So anybody that gets a different program, and there's a lot more kids in this kind of program than there ever has been in special ed., you have to pay attention to it.

In the same vein, Bob feels that more time and preparation on the part of administrators at all levels should be put towards planned change in the implementation of French immersion programs, particularly in areas such as the building of a French immersion library.

It took us a long time to get the library in place. I think that is another problem too, that is if you're going to have French immersion, you have to start a year, year and one-half in advance. You can't start you know like the decision wasn't made as to where French immersion is going to go until almost the middle of summer. Bingo, Teacher B's coming over to this school. Ah, it was on me before I even knew it was going to come because they weren't sure they were going to put it in this school, that school or where it was going to go. Heh, it was kind of a last minute decision. That was unfair again to myself, certainly unfair to the teachers and unfair to the students. But we picked up a handful of library books that Teacher B had ordered from School B [where there was a French immersion program partly established], brought them over here and that was our library. We should have been ordering books a year and one-half in advance so that when Teacher B arrived here there was a decent library already in place. You can't order a library, we didn't have library books, we now have a good library, but that's three years later and that's how long it takes to get a good library. You know and we will, we will have a good library by the end of this June and that's a lot, that's three years of ordering books and so on and so forth.

Tidbits of advice.

Other small pieces of advice such as the following were given by various administrators. One stressed the importance of the big picture.

So I would say how about a talk with yourself and think about the big picture. Read the research and remember that you may have to reinvent your own will but you can certainly get help from people that have been there and have come through it and think about the

world, don't just think about your own little area. We have people in this world that have, you're right, four or five languages.

The importance of being able to engender an air of calmness in the school despite personal misgivings was also stressed.

Well first of all I would have to say they can't be excitable, you know they have to be pretty even keeled. They can't be hyperactive or they will drive their staff crazy.

Finally, another advised how to avoid arguments about bilingualism at social functions. The other bit of administrative, the other bit of information I'd give that administrator is that when you're out at, out in public parties and so on, never ever tell anyone you're the Administrator of a bilingual school because you're going to run into people who have an axe to grind, so I never tell anyone that I'm an Administrator of a bilingual school. You know, I don't know whether you found that, there are some people who are real rednecks and don't believe in it. And of course you'll spend your night arguing and I don't believe in arguing.

Summary of Categories

Administrators' discussions were captured in six major categories, many of which had sub-categories. The categories emphasized the notion of commitment to the program and the necessity of active principal support. Principals identified various reasons for choosing to support French immersion. Principals also stressed the importance of understanding the context of French immersion programs. They related their understanding of the program in terms of the nature of their students and parents, the resistance or opposition to French and the acculturation of teachers. In addition, respondents of this study greatly emphasized the need for effective communication skills when marketing the program and working with parents and parent groups. They pointed out several issues in which they felt that their interpersonal skills were crucial in fostering a healthy school climate. All principals identified their main coping strategy as that

of depending on others when faced with responsibilities such as the evaluation of the French immersion teacher's language proficiency, the evaluation of teachers with problems, the evaluation of pedagogical aspects of teaching, judging students achievement, dealing with curriculum matters and communicating in French.

The administrators interviewed in this study also elaborated upon their concerns about the program. Some were common to all principals whereas others were unique to a principal. Concerns discussed by the principals were the availability of print and non-print resources, the availability of French immersion teachers, language versus pedagogical skills, unilingual Francophone teachers, transferring French immersion students and the same students being together for at least six years.

Finally, principals offered several pieces of advice to incoming principals of elementary programs. Advice given related to notions such as nothing replacing experience, building a network of resource people, increasing one's knowledge of the program, increasing one's knowledge of French and a number of others.

Themes

The administration of French immersion programs has affected both the personal and professional lives of the respondents. The emergence of themes which resulted from the interviews are now so deeply internalized that they have become part of both participants' personal and professional lives.

A Growth Experience

One major theme was the growth in their administrative skills, understanding, tolerance and support for bilingualism through their experience as French immersion administrators. The process had been a difficult one for many

but they all felt that it had been worthwhile. The following comments were made by principals who had between two to eleven years of experience as a French immersion administrator.

"It's a growth process".

"It's just been a good growing situation for me as an Administrator to be involved with French immersion."

"So I found personal and professional growth in administering the program, but don't forget I've been with it for ten years."

Donald who was able to upgrade his knowledge of the French language is appreciative of the opportunities that he now has on the job market because of his experience as a French immersion administrator. He commented that:

"I think it's also offered more opportunities to me because the direction that more people seem to be going is they want in all the positions that are open now, being all equal someone with French knowledge will be taken over who is just unilingual. You know so I've been appreciative of that."

The growth process was exemplified in the comments respondents made about having acquired a greater understanding of the French culture resulting in an increase of tolerance of others. Respondents explained the increase in understanding and tolerance on the parts of those affected by the immersion program in the following ways:

I believe that it has increased my tolerance and my understanding of people who are different in the fact that I have dealt very closely and with many people over the years who are Francophones who have come from Québec, they tell me things that help me understand where they are coming from when they tell me that they are raised to believe that Québec is their country, not just a province, not a part of Canada, but it is their country. Then I have a better understanding of their feelings of patriotism and the kinds of things that have made them a little bit different from me in terms of culture and attitude, so it has increased my understanding of another group of people. And I hope that it has increased theirs because I hope that it has made them feel more a part of Canada, with some maybe, with some

maybe not, I don't know.

It's made the kids more tolerant, it's made the teachers more tolerant, it's made me more tolerant, it's made me a better person. I see things in a much different light now than I ever, I was a pretty good red-neck Albertan. I have to be man enough to admit that and it's just made an entirely different person out of me. I'm a much broader-minded person.

And I know that our children in this school come out of here a lot better people because of it and my teachers are a lot better because of it. Let's face it, how many people on this staff ever had to deal with somebody from Québec until they ran into Teacher B. Nothing like dealing with a French person heh? You know and that, I think that they would never have had that experience so since that time, they have dealt with several personalities from various Canadian provinces and the strange thing about it is that as time has gone on there have been some good friendships built between members of this staff and those people that came from different parts of the country to teach here.

In regard to just being in a French immersion school, I think it's increased my knowledge in languages and it's increased my understanding and appreciation of differences. Tolerance levels, we talked about it earlier, those areas, and for me I've been able to put myself in the learners shoes as much as maybe some of our young children who come into school knowing no French or very little. And I gain appreciation for their experience because of having gone through my own experience in this learning process.

I've learned more about Québec and I think maybe I should go there and do English as a second language program, but I'd never be admitted. We're very kind to each other actually when it comes to the politics of our two provinces, but we have learned, I've learned a lot about how they feel about their own country which is what they call it and that's fine.

As a consequence of increased understanding and tolerance, some participants have undergone transformation of their own views about the world and have observed others such as teachers and students doing the same.

And of course I became, I would honestly say probably when I was first told I was going I didn't even apply for it, I was just told I was going there, I was taken aback because I wasn't even all that keen on bilingualism at the time and I, but I was thrown right into the situation and I saw a lot of value to it and I became a very strong

supporter of bilingualism.

As a person, yeah. No I can't now I couldn't prove that but I am pretty sure that we've made a better person out of him [a French immersion teacher] and he has a better understanding of life. You know like his understanding of life is no different than somebody that lived all their life in an Albertan city. He lived all his life in Montréal and he saw the world as Montréal saw it and we have a lot of people that grew up in this city and they see the world as this Western city sees it and until you make those two people mix together and work for a while, that's how they're going to see the world. Now Teacher A and some of these people from this city see the world a little differently and that's great.

Working with Others

The reality for all the respondents was that their lack of fluency in French necessitated that they develop various strategies to complete those tasks that demanded French fluency. These ranged from involvement in hiring, consulting with and evaluating teachers, to handling written correspondence and speaking on the telephone. The principals did not view these as a loss of control although they were cognizant of the importance of the judgements they made.

And sometimes you have to make yourself vulnerable, you have to be able to trust those people that you make yourself vulnerable to. If you're not willing to make yourself vulnerable, then you're going to fall on your face because there will always be someone who comes along to challenge.

At least one principal recognized the importance of not leaving the responsibility for the program with the teacher. In particular, Alan stressed the need for the principal to take full ownership of the program. I was under the impression that Teacher B knew how to run a French immersion program and I didn't really have to worry about it. And that was wrong; that wasn't her job to run it. Because they were well aware of the possible repercussions for hiring a poor teacher, respondents put a lot of emphasis on this process. For example, Alan commented

that:

The language problem could become paramount there because that teacher can say: "Well, if you understood me better and understood what it was doing, you wouldn't be saying these things about me."

While some came from jurisdictions where adequate language proficiency was mandatory and enforced, other recognized the frustration of choosing between a competent teacher and a native speaker.

Principals continued to use the same strategies for monitoring instruction as they used with English program teachers and felt that their previous experience made judgment relatively easy. One principal confessed that not understanding what teachers were saying denied him access to a level of teaching he saw as important. Alan felt "a void" when evaluating French immersion teachers because he cannot "fully understand what the teacher is trying to do" all the time. He wished he had a lot better grounding in French.

For another principal, his "gut feeling" about the teacher's level of language obtained by extrapolation from the use of teaching strategies more appropriate at a secondary level, led him to reorganize the timetable. This allowed a competent French immersion teacher the opportunity to assess the teacher's language use and confirmed the principal's suspicions.

Working with others to meet the needs of the program was not confined to administrative matters. Many of the respondents actively encouraged French and English program teachers of the same grade level to cooperate.

In all of the situations, the administrator was depending on their own interpersonal skills, to read situations, to monitor learning, to encourage cooperation and to seek help.

Balancing Programs

The principals' concern to balance all programs was evident in that they stressed the necessity to focus on one school as opposed to one program only in order to foster cooperation and unity with students and teachers. They did so in a variety of ways. For example, some principals designated all classes of the same grade level regardless of the program to classrooms within close proximity. Another instance is when principals exposed all students of the school to the same cultural programs.

One principal also pointed out the importance of knowing one's own "big picture" in order to put into wider perspective the rationale for the program when establishing one's school vision and goals for the school as a whole. All the respondents believe that it was best to seek lots of advice in setting up a program as opposed to learning from one's experience only. Sources of advice varied from research findings to other administrators' personal experiences with the implementation process.

Principals found the school climate important to foster learning, and support good staff morale. This concern for school climate was apparent when administrators discussed the need for good interpersonal skills. For instance, they paid particular attention to the notions of fairness and staff cohesiveness.

The Potential for Conflict

Principals were aware of the need for balance because the French immersion program could be a source of conflict. In many cases, principals spend a lot of time explaining the program and its implications to immersion and non-immersion parents and teachers alike.

Many principals kept "their thumb on the heartbeat" of the parent groups in order to monitor them closely and direct their energies where they saw fit.

Some administrators wanted parents to be sure that placing their children in the program was truly an educational decision and that they were fully informed about the consequences of putting their children in immersion.

I think you have to make parents aware and the principal aware that children can fail in French as well as they can fail in English. They seem to think that my child has to fail, oh my gosh, well in English they might not have been a problem, why is it a problem in French.

Since French immersion parents were better organized and more active in the schools than their English counterparts, some problems between the two groups were occurring. Because of this, some principals had to reorganize the set-up of their parent groups as to encourage all parents to participate in contributing to the school as a whole.

Principals were also sensitive to problems resulting from the lack of comprehension of the situation for new Québec teachers as well as language use in the school and the staff room. Some respondents also became aware of the fact that some new teachers, particularly those from Québec who didn't know the school system, saw them as being heavy-handed.

Participants in this study also learned to move in quickly to anticipate, help solve or mediate problems that may have occurred between children of different programs.

Summary of Themes

The essence of being a French immersion Principal for the respondents stressed the opportunity it provided for personal and professional growth for all

involved in bilingual education, and the importance of the principal's interpersonal skills in developing an administrative operation that invested heavily in the cooperation and involvement of others. They saw themselves as trying to create one school by balancing the programs' uniqueness with common educational opportunities, and finally they recognized their need to be ever vigilant for the potential of conflict in the school community. They hoped that with time the program would be better accepted and that French speaking Principals would no longer recognize these themes as reflecting their experiences.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate what it means for an anglophone principal with little or no knowledge of French to administer a French immersion program in an elementary school in Alberta. The specific questions addressed by the study:

1. What were the administrative experiences of principals of French immersion programs?
2. What kinds of issues and concerns about administration were raised by the principals in this study?
3. In what ways did a lack of knowledge of French affect the principal's role as an administrator?
4. What critical incidents had the principal experienced because of a lack of knowledge of French?
5. How have principals coped in these situations?
6. What advice would principals give to other French immersion school administrators?

Research Design

The design of the study was based upon the interpretive paradigm which purpose is to bring to light the meanings and understandings of the subjective realities of the work of the Anglophone principals of French immersion programs.

Because of the time involved in obtaining a depth of focus, the number of respondents was limited to eight elementary school principals with little or no knowledge of the French language. The administrators were from four Albertan school jurisdictions and their administrative experience varied from three to over ten years from which two to eleven years were as an administrator of a school with a French immersion program. Five respondents were male and three were female. With the exception of two administrators, all respondents were principals of dual-track schools. One participant administered a multicultural centre while another was a principal of a French immersion centre.

The piloted data collection instrument was the semi-structured interview. The research questions stated above formed the basis of the interview guide. The format of the interview consisted of open-ended questions to avoid directing, controlling or narrowing information potentially available from respondents and to encourage a flow of conversation. All interviews were taped, transcribed and then sent by mail to the respondents in order for them to check for accuracy of information.

Based upon content analysis, the colour-coded transcripts were examined so as to formulate and record categories emerging from the data. Finally, themes resulting from underlying messages were outlined.

To ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the data analysis, I resorted to member-checks, peer debriefing and the audit trail as recommended by Guba and Lincoln (1981) in their article on naturalistic inquiry.

Summary of Major Findings

In essence, respondents in this study were of the opinion that a lack of

knowledge of the French language did not hinder their role as an administrator of a school with a French immersion program, although they admitted that French language proficiency would definitely be an asset. However, they did perceive certain factors to be essential to the effective administration of a French immersion program. They are: commitment, understanding of the context of French immersion programs, communication and depending on others.

Commitment

During the interviews, many of the administrators alluded to the concept of commitment. The meaning of the notion of commitment on the part of the principal varied from one respondent to another. However, all agreed that it was a critical factor in the successful implementation and continuation of a French immersion program. The interviewees also recognized the high level of commitment to the second language programs on the parts of both the immersion parents and teachers. "Being sold on the program" and administrator attitudes were strongly emphasized.

Understanding the Context of the French Immersion Programs

Many respondents talked about the notion of "misconception" as being the root to many potential problems associated with French immersion programs. Therefore, they pointed out the need for all directly or indirectly concerned with the program to develop a greater understanding of the context of French immersion programs.

Some of the respondents interviewed were clear in stating that although the French immersion programs are different from the regular English programs, French immersion students were in fact no different from non-immersion students.

They talked about having to drive this message across to students, teachers and parents alike. In particular, one principal was adamant in stating that the belief that immersion students were the "cream of the crop" is a fallacy while another found that there is some preselection of immersion students.

A number of the participants of this study commented on the strong commitment and involvement of immersion parents in the school. A couple of principals talked about having to channel immersion parents' energies in the right direction if they themselves were to keep "running the show". Another principal noticed that immersion parents involved at his school which is situated in a higher socio-economic area pose questions of a pedagogical nature rather than strictly asking if their children are behaving or not.

Several respondents in this study indicated that there existed some opposition to French or immersion programs in one form or another on the part of non-immersion students, teachers and/or parents who feel that preferential treatment is given to the immersion program at the expense of the non-immersion program. Non-immersion teachers fear the loss of their jobs and non-immersion parents and students do not want to be displaced due to the immersion program. A fair number of the respondents commented on the existence of an underlying current of prejudice or resentment towards French. However, one respondent suggested that hard feelings toward French and the immersion program are to be expected since resistance is part of the process of planned change.

It was found that there is a wide variety of French immersion teachers in Alberta due to the supply and demand factor. Some participants alluded to the fact that non-Alberta French immersion teachers arrive in this province with a

different mindset. They commented on the fact that acculturation of these teachers takes time.

Communication

Many of the participants in this study stressed the importance of developing and maintaining good public relations with non-immersion parents as well as immersion parents and the local community at large. They referred to public relations not as putting on a good face for the public, but rather as informing and educating parents and other citizens in the local school community about the program as much as possible to avoid feelings of prejudice to arise in the school or in the community. Half of the principals interviewed saw their role as "selling" the immersion program. One of the respondents saw the French immersion program as "becoming less and less of a selling job" because of its proven benefits. In addition, many respondents found themselves working closely with a parent group called "Canadian Parents for French" which has been known for its lobbies in the recent past. However some principals have designed the set-up of the school parent association so as to include representatives of each program at the school and/or representatives of each class in order to encourage all parents in the school to work together for the school as a whole.

All principals in this study emphasized the need for the principals to demonstrate good interpersonal skills when dealing with others because they felt that they must be able to show leadership and sensitivity towards both immersion and non-immersion students and teaching personnel. They talked about having to perceive and recognize the needs, concerns and personal problems of others and of being skilled at resolving conflicts involving students and/or teachers.

Participants found themselves concentrating their attention and efforts on issues such as the following: focus on one school rather than one program, staff cohesiveness, immersion teacher attitudes, working across programs, fairness and sensitivity to languages spoken in the school.

Depending on Others

Depending on others is the major coping strategy used by all respondents when affected by a lack of, or little knowledge of, the French language. Many principals admitted having a heavy reliance, or dependency, upon resource people who are formally, or informally, selected to assist them in situations calling for a knowledge of the second language. These resource people can be one or many of the following: external consultants from Alberta's provincial department of education, or from the University of Alberta's French faculty of education, Faculte St-Jean; second language consultants or supervisors from the school district's central office, a member of the administrative team i.e. the assistant-principal who may happen to know French, or again, a key immersion teacher who masters the second language. Areas with which principals need help are: evaluation of French immersion staff language proficiency, evaluation of teachers with problems, judging students' achievements, dealing with curriculum matters and oral and written communication such as on the phone or face-to-face conversations, correspondence and ordering curriculum material.

In terms of evaluating the French immersion teacher's ability to teach, several respondents said that they look for criteria that should be present in the teacher's performance irrespective of the language of instruction. Some principals admitted having difficulty with detecting "nuances" such as the teacher's level of

questioning. A few principals commented on the fact that they "talk more" to their French immersion teachers to "stay on top of it".

During the interviews, principals expressed their concerns towards French immersion. Moreover, they were asked what specific advice they would give to incoming anglophone principals of French immersion programs. Some suggestions were common to several respondents whereas other comments were unique to each individual.

Concerns

The main concerns expressed by the principals with reference to French immersion were: availability of human and physical resources, language versus pedagogical skills of French immersion teachers, acculturation versus militancy of unilingual francophone teachers and the transfer of French immersion students to the regular English program.

Advice

Despite the growing availability of workshop for beginning versus experienced anglophone administrators of French immersion programs, many respondents in this study have pointed out the value of personal experience and of experiences of others over and above that of workshops although they have found these worthwhile in some respects.

Some principals' advice to incoming administrators was to "make sure" that you build a network of resource people, be they central office personnel, second language supervisors, teachers and/or others who are willing to help the principal cope with his "human or academic deficiencies".

Public relations and interpersonal skills were considered to be vital by a

number of principals. They stressed the importance of dealing with conflicts related to the French immersion program which may arise in the community or within staff members to maintain and/or promote a "positive school climate". One principal pointed out that if "administrators try to overlook those problems they don't go away, they become bigger".

Other pieces of advice offered by respondents were: increasing one's knowledge of the program, increasing one's knowledge of French, hiring one bilingual person to be part of the school administrative team, reassuring parents, telling parents the truth, getting rid of one's biases, supporting teachers versus watching them burnout, having Francophone teachers respect proper channels of authority, acknowledging program needs and other tidbits of advice.

Summary of Themes

The administration of French immersion programs by anglophone principals has affected both the personal and professional lives of respondents. Themes that have emerged from the data are: a growth experience, working with others, balancing programs and the potential for conflict.

Reflections

The undertaking of this study has of course encouraged me to reflect upon the issue of anglophone principals and French immersion schools. These reflections based on related literature and personal experience have resulted in the strengthening and/or the transformation of some of the views which I held prior to this study.

Reflections Based on Related Literature

One can find many similarities between the findings of the review of related

literature and the results of this study. First, both sources acknowledged the importance of understanding the context of the French immersion program and of recognizing the implications of bilingual education. However, although some researchers put enormous emphasis on French immersion as planned change, only one respondent stressed its importance. In fact, Alan felt that many problems that he had to face as an administrator would not have occurred had the implementation of the French immersion program been treated as a process of planned change instead of a product and had the school boards and school district administrators been more committed to the program than they were in reality. For instance, problems related to parent groups and lack of curriculum resources would not have had to be dealt with.

Second, there is much agreement between related literature and this study on the role of the French immersion parents in terms of the nature of these parents, their goals and social milieu influences. Where they are contradictory findings within the related literature as well as between literature research and this study are in regard to elitism. Some respondents felt that immersion students were no different from non-immersion students as far as academic achievement, intelligence and general background. For example, Heather had much difficulty in convincing her non-immersion teachers of this view.

Third, the findings between literature research and this study in relation to school factors are comparable in terms of the role of the principal, the role of the French immersion teacher and curriculum resources. Although respondents agreed that the role of the principal as instructional leader was critical, they all felt that they could fulfil their responsibilities as such even though they absolutely had

to depend on others to help them in this area. Research literature points out the need for principals not only to understand teaching methods as well as subject matter taught but also have knowledge of the French language when dealing with specific components of the second language program. In this respect, there is a discrepancy between research literature and the data of this research as to whether principals should know French or not.

Last, the findings between research literature and this study are similar in relation to student achievement. Both sources of data indicate that generally, students in immersion do well and that the program is suited to all students. As a general rule, principals in this study seemed to agree with research literature's statement although some felt that immersion would not be appropriate for students whose parents were not sold on the program or who lacked confidence in their children's abilities.

It is obvious that as a researcher, I value the contributions of research to the field of education. However, as I read about multicultural education and more specifically French immersion, it became clear to me that since French immersion is a relatively new field in Canada and since researchers have only really begun to pay attention to it in the last fifteen years, research alone should not be considered as the answer in French immersion education, especially when major decisions are to be made. Research findings should by all means be studied and referred to, but at the same time should serve as a guide rather than the "gospel truth". Because so little is known for sure in the field of French immersion, there is a tendency in all of us to hang on to research findings as tightly as possible even though these may be subject to change.

For example, although "the benefits of an early starting age have been debated extensively for several years" (Day & Shapson, 1988, p. 291), there still exists the popular belief that early immersion is more effective than late immersion. This belief is strongly maintained "because research has also demonstrated a strong relationship between achievement and amount of time spent learning the second language" (Day & Shapson, 1988, 292). These authors also state that "However, empirical studies have uncovered little evidence of the superiority [of] younger second language learners. They suggest on the contrary that older learners are quicker and more efficient because of their more advanced cognitive skills" (p. 292).

Another example is related to French immersion students who are experiencing learning problems and to decisions pertaining to the transfer of these students to regular English classes. Current research (see Bruck, in Cummins, 1983) indicates that most problems experienced by students are cross-lingual. Therefore Bruck in particular promotes leaving the student in difficulty in the French immersion class and offering him/her remediation. She believes that in these cases academics will suffer no matter which language, so the students may as well acquire the second language oral proficiency. It should be noted that research states that students of below average ability can learn the oral skills in the second language with no major problems despite the fact that they may be experiencing learning difficulties and/or do poorly in academic subjects. Despite Bruck's recommendation, the issue of keeping or transferring the students with learning difficulties remains problematic in Alberta because there are few remediation services available to French immersion students. Hence, in this case, research has

to be relied upon cautiously because the context in which Bruck's findings occurred are different from ours. It is important to note that Bruck's findings resulted from studies done in Montréal where French is not a minority language.

The context in which second language research is done is important to consider when studying its findings. For instance, one should be cautious when studying second language education findings found in the United States as opposed to Canada. One has to remember that the contexts of second language education differ quite markedly between the two countries. In Canada, French stands as one of the two recognized official languages whereas in the United States, English is the only official language. In this country, the rights of the French minority with regard to their language are protected by the 1981 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom. Across the southern border, the rights of minority language groups are not officially recognized. In addition, the Canadian government provides considerable funds in support of French as a second language education. In the United States, few funds are available for second language education. Some parents must pay for instruction of a second language to their children (Rickards, 1984).

Thus, administrators, educators and parents alike must carefully consider the context in which research findings are found. Also, because French immersion is a relatively new research field, one can expect new research findings to evolve, change and even contradict past ones.

Personal Reflections

This study has shown the Anglophone principals' perceptions of their role in relation to French immersion education. They indicated that the lack of

knowledge of the French language has not affected their role as administrators although they admitted knowing French would be an asset. However it would also be interesting to find out what the subjective realities of the French immersion teachers are concerning the lack of knowledge of French of their principals to see if they feel that students and themselves are indeed affected by it.

In this study, a number of principals indicated that they rely heavily on "unofficial" head teachers or coordinators to assist them in various areas. Although this coping strategy is perfectly logical on the part of the principal, there is always an inherent danger that immersion teachers will be given responsibilities in areas that are sometimes outside of their jurisdiction, especially when it comes to matters of evaluating language and pedagogical skills of their colleagues! Another potential danger is that these teachers can become overworked and burned-out over a given length of time. These factors can in fact affect their teaching performance because of lack of time to fully attend to their teaching duties. Moreover, because these teachers who receive no official title or added remuneration are assigned added responsibilities of an administrative nature and are not always given extra preparation time, credit or recognition for their efforts, they could become resentful and/or lose some of the enthusiasm that they initially exhibited when entering their respective schools. I believe that principals must re-think this coping strategy as it can easily lead to the exploitation of "unofficial head teachers".

A last reflection worth noting is that as I was interviewing principals and analysing the data, I noticed that because of the lack of qualified French immersion teachers, school boards and principals often had to choose between two types of teachers when hiring French immersion personnel: those who possessed

adequate French language skills and less than adequate pedagogical skills and those who had good pedagogical skills and mediocre oral and written language skills. I found that some school jurisdictions had a tendency to select the first type because administrators were concerned about the notion of the French immersion teacher being the sole language model to the students. Other school jurisdictions tended to opt for the second type of teachers because of their concern for staff unity. Boards who hired Francophone teachers because of their French language competencies appear to experience more problems with staff unity because acculturation of these teachers takes time. Therefore, the selection of French immersion teachers remains a big dilemma. Perhaps, the provision of ongoing orientation workshops for new teachers, especially those from Québec, would dissipate the "militancy" problems, and permit school boards to hire teachers with adequate language proficiency skills more often than they do.

Implications for Practice

There are several implications for practice that have resulted from this study.

I have numbered and listed them below for the sake of clarity.

1. School district and school level administrators must not only be perceived to be, but also be committed to the concept of second language education.
2. School district and school level administrators would benefit from attending workshops and/or courses on the implementation process of French immersion and its problems.
3. Because of the nature of the French immersion context, French immersion principals must be open-minded and willing to adapt since their new role will most likely require transformation of views and personal and professional

development.

4. Principals would benefit from being given more time to prepare for their new role by their school district administrators. Time would allow them to instill in them a better understanding of the philosophy of second language learning as well as a greater understanding of the program needs such as human and physical resources, etc.
5. Principals must keep abreast of new research findings which may affect important decisions regarding French immersion issues in their district or their school. The issues could pertain to student transfers, helping factors in student achievement, benefits of early and middle or late immersion, etc.
6. Principals need to examine a variety of ways to promote instructional leadership and quality instruction.
7. Administrators of French immersion programs must develop and maintain effective public relations and interpersonal skills due to the politics of French immersion in a dual-track school. This means that they must be aware of the expectations of parents and the local school community as well as the special needs of students and teachers.
8. Principals must become sensitive and knowledgeable about the French culture as they are working with many Francophone teachers.
9. As some school jurisdictions already are and others will be leaning more and more towards hiring one bilingual administrator to be part of the school administrative team, it would be useful to the unilingual principals to acquire a basic understanding and working knowledge of the target language.
10. Principals should be encouraged to make contact with other principals of

French immersion programs in order to discuss potential or existing problems related to immersion before and after implementation of the program.

11. It is crucial for principals to set up a network of resource people knowledgeable in French immersion and in the French language so that they may rely upon them when appropriate.
12. When relying on unofficial head teachers or coordinators, principals should provide extra preparation time for him/her to meet the added administrative responsibilities required of them.
13. Principals should encourage their French immersion teachers to perfect their French language oral and written skills and/or pedagogical skills.
14. Orientation sessions for French immersion teachers (especially those from Québec) who are new to the district would be useful.
15. Principals should encourage and schedule grade level meetings to take place between teachers of different programs.

Implications for Research

The following implications for research are based upon the findings of this study. In essence, all respondents found themselves unprepared when they were first asked to administer French immersion programs. At least one respondent stressed the importance of school district personnel to better understand the context of French immersion programs and the need for long-range planning. All participants found that although the lack of knowledge of French did not hinder their role as an administrator, they admitted that it would definitely be an asset. Some principals confessed that they could not appreciate the "nuances" of French

instruction. It would be interesting to find out to what extent teachers perceive this as a problem. In addition much of the principals' time is spent "balancing programs" to maintain unity and harmony. What about pro-active leadership in school effectiveness? Finally, most respondents insisted that immersion students do not differ from non-immersion students. Research findings are quite contradictory on this issue.

Based on the findings of this study, it becomes evident that in order to improve the effectiveness of schools with a French immersion program, the field of education would benefit if further research were done on the following topics.

1. Effective ways to educate and prepare anglophone principals to administer French immersion programs.
2. Effective ways to educate and prepare school district personnel about second language education.
3. Comparison between the effectiveness of schools run by anglophone and bilingual (French and English) administrators.
4. Perceptions of French immersion teachers on the effectiveness of anglophone principals of immersion programs.
5. Comparison between the effectiveness of dual-track schools and French immersion centres.
6. Differences between non-immersion students and immersion students.
7. Differences between immersion and non-immersion parents.
8. French immersion as an educational innovation worthy of planned change.

It is hoped that although much more is to be learned in the field of French immersion instruction, that this study will help shed some light and understanding

on the difficult role of anglophone elementary school principals in the context of French immersion programs in Alberta.

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APPENDIX I

March 28, 1989

(Name of Principal)

My name is Nicole Lamarre and I am now beginning data collection for my thesis project which I am presently working on in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Master of Educational Administration in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Alberta. My thesis topic is "The Administration of French immersion programs in Alberta's Elementary Schools by Anglophone Principals". This thesis proposal has already been approved by my advisor, Dr. Margaret Haughey and by the University of Alberta Educational Administration Ethics Review Committee.

I am contacting you upon recommendation of a colleague of [name and position], who suggested that you may be able and willing to participate in my study. This study requires principals with little or no knowledge of the French language who are presently administering French immersion programs at the elementary level in your district.

If you chose to be a respondent in this study, your participation would entail the following:

1. Filling out a very short demographic questionnaire.
2. Participating in a one hour audio-taped interview, scheduled at your convenience, and dealing with the five research questions which you will find attached.
3. Reading a copy of the transcription of the interview, which I will mail out to you, for accuracy of information.
4. Participating in a telephone or an in-person follow-up interview to permit you to add, omit, change, or confirm the information discussed during the first interview.

Please note that although quotes will be used in the thesis publication, both anonymity and confidentiality in regard to names of principals and schools will be respected. Also participants will be able to opt out of the study at any time for any given reason. In addition, a copy of the results of the study will be forwarded to the participant's school district central office.

.../2

In order to expedite the paperwork to Field Services requesting permission from school districts to have their principals involved in this study, I will be telephoning you shortly at your school to inquire as to your decision whether or not to participate.

In the event that you will be able and willing to participate in this study, please fill out and sign the release form, which is also attached.

Thank you very much for your attention to this matter. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

Nicole Lamarre

Attachments

APPENDIX II

PENDING PERMISSION OF THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT, _____

_____, I, _____

_____, AM ABLE AND WILLING TO PARTICIPATE
IN NICOLE LAMARRE'S THESIS STUDY AS PER OUTLINED IN HER LETTER
POSTDATED
MARCH 28TH, 1989.

I UNDERSTAND THAT ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF NAMES OF
PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOLS WILL BE RESPECTED DURING THE ENTIRE STUDY
AND IN ITS PUBLICATION AND THAT I MAY OPT OUT OF THE STUDY AT ANY
TIME FOR ANY GIVEN REASON.

SIGNATURE

DATE

APPENDIX III

Spring, 1989

Dear [Name of Principal]:

As agreed upon, I am forwarding to you two interview transcripts of the interview that took place between the two of us on [date]. One of the copies is of the original transcript whereas the other copy is the transcript which was revised by myself to keep the anonymity of the people and school mentioned during the interview.

Also in the left margin of the transcript, you will find comments that I have made about my interpretation of the interview content. Please indicate in the right margin your own comments about the interview in addition to changes, omissions, etc.

Please be advised that I will contact you at the end of the month to follow-up on your comments about the interview transcript.

Thank you so much for your cooperation in my study. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at either U of A - 492-4913 or at home - 352-8872.

Yours truly,

Nicole Lamarre

APPENDIX IV **DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. How would you rate your ability to communicate in French using a scale from one to three? Please circle the appropriate answer.

	Little	Moderate	Excellent
understanding	1	2	3
speaking	1	2	3
reading	1	2	3
writing	1	2	3

2. Including this school year, how many years of administrative experience have you had in schools? Please circle the appropriate answer.

- a. 0 - 2 years
- b. 3 - 5 years
- c. 6 - 10 years
- d. over 10 years

3. Including this year, how many years of administrative experience have you had with French immersion programs only? Please circle appropriate answer.

- a. 0 - 2 years
- b. 3 - 5 years
- c. 6 - 10 years
- d. over 10 years

4. Which category best describes your school? Please circle appropriate answer.

- a. Dual track school: a school in which there is coexistence of both the regular English program and the French immersion program.

- b. French immersion centre: a school which solely houses French immersion programs.
- c. Multicultural centre: a school which houses a regular English program, a French immersion program as well as another second language program.
- d. Other: please specify.

5. Which grade levels does your school offer to the student population?

- a. K - 6
- b. 7 - 9
- c. 10 - 12

APPENDIX V

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT EXTRACT

Nicole: M-m-m. Okay I think that brings us to a second question which is like the critical incidents that you may or may not have experienced because of a lack of knowledge of French. It is quite related to the first questions, but perhaps it would be, ah call for an example that you could walk me through in which you as an Administrator wished you had known the French language but didn't.

Alan: Again, ah thinking about this question, the only real problem that I had and I've run into it on two or three occasions is doing teacher evaluation, it's really the only problem where you can't (pause) fully understand what the teacher is trying to do and I feel that there is a void in there and we can take Teacher B for example since she went through this and then she and I had a very real experience in that is that I probably wasn't able to help her as much (pause) as I should have been able to had I been able to understand exactly what she was trying to do. Even though we discussed this in English maybe it wasn't coming through, then again maybe it was the lack of experience of which I will ah elude to later on here in dealing with French immersion totally. There's, there's a preparation situation there that I think is very, very necessary and I wasn't completely prepared in that particular area.

Nicole: M-m-m.

Alan: And I'll talk about that later too. Uh...

Nicole: Okay so for example in the instances of evaluation, how do you cope in those situations? I know that you bring in evaluation teams.

Alan: Yeah.

Nicole: Or external evaluators.

Alan: I bring...

Nicole: So that is how you would cope with the situation.

APPENDIX VI
LOG BOOK EXTRACT

Feb 20

SOME ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT ANGLOPHONE ADMINISTRATORS

Until recently, I had strongly felt that administrators that were fluent in both the English and French languages would be more effective principals. This assumption was based mostly on the fact that anglophone principals cannot adequately play an important instructional\educational leadership role vis-a-vis French immersion teachers. To me it appeared that anglophone administrators could not adequately provide in-services or evaluation for their French immersion teachers. After observing and talking to some anglophone principals and after reflecting upon the anglophone principals that I had worked with\under in the past, I realized that although a few of them are anglophone, they were and still are effective principals. My new bias is now perhaps that the lack of or limited knowledge of the second language may not be a detriment to anglophone principals if they have exceptional communication skills (in its most general meaning) with people in general. However in cases where this does not exist, the anglophone administrator with poor communication skills and who lacks a network of qualified resource people will perhaps be less successful as a French immersion administrator.

Better Understanding of Life

Feb 25

Ideas

Principal A: Administering a French immersion program is a learning process (professionally and personally) in which he

experienced growing pains.

Feb 26 - Ideas

Principal A: . Getting to know each other (p. 12) (understanding other culture, language, people) 2" staffs in 1"

- . Getting along (as personalities) (p. 17)
- . Getting ready (preparation)
- . Getting help
- . Knowing what goes on
- . Getting to know the program, the F.I. context

Understanding a New Context

- . Respecting differences
- . Knowing where we're going (p. 8-9)
- . Worry and be happy (p. 10)
- . Learning a lesson "Growing Pains"
- . Being open-minded

In a Note to Principal A,

I Have Presented to Him the Two Following

Categories and Have Asked Him to Comment on Them:

1. Getting to know each other and getting along.
2. Knowing where we're going and getting ready.

I will seek his feedback at the beginning of March.

While Reading "Reawakening Aesthetic Insight", an article by Jan Jagodzinski (1988), U of A, a few notions reminded me of Principal A. Check the following references in future.

p. 126... "It is through our failures that we learn who we are. Repair is nurturing and healing"...

p. 142... "The personal cannot be separated from the political (public) lifestyle, as many feminists claim, must be congruent with one's political style"...

Note: Perhaps this is why Principal A has to become more open-minded towards French immersion so that his personal style would have to come into harmony with the public image that he found himself having to develop and maintain.

Feb 27th '89: Chose 2 classmates for member checking

Carol - Lynn Oldale

Del Litke

Feb 27th '89: New themes creeping up

- . Making a difference - Making one's mark.
- . Owning the program - Being (or becoming) responsible for it.
- . $1 + 1 = 1$
- . "Hey, wait a minute!"

- . "You too, hey!"
- . "Don't be afraid, it's not going to bite you!"
- . Being "one".
- . "Yes, there are side-effects".

Maybe conceptual framework should be change to following:

EXAMPLE OF A CONTENT ANALYSIS FILE - FOLDER

CONTENT ANALYSIS

THE RESEARCH QUESTION
NO. 1 + 3

HEADING:

Coping Strategies

SUB-HEADINGS

COMMONALITY:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H

COMMENTS:

BY CATEGORY
NO.

POSSIBLE CATEGORY:
1. Interpersonal Skills

NEW CATEGORY:

KEEP	OMIT	CHANGE

POSSIBLE SUB-CATEGORIES:

1. Sensitivity to the need of the SL teacher to speak French.
2. Making an Effort to Learn the Target language (Making the SL teacher feel comfortable).
3. "One Staff" or "Oneness".
4. Working Across Programs.
5. Fairness Across Programs.
6. "Commitment to Team Effort".
7. "Focus on School, not Program" (A School-Wide Philo. not just a programming Philo.
8. Talking/Being sensitive/Trust.

NEW SUB-CATEGORIES:

KEEP	OMIT	CHANGE

COMMONALITY:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H

BY THEME
NO.

THEME 1
1. Building Friendships
2. Pride
3. Giving vs. Self-Interests

KEEP	OMIT	CHANGE

NEW THEME:

COMMONALITY:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H

COMMENTS:
Pride overlap with No. 6 res. quest. By Theme

DATE
May8
May10
May14
May19

INT
NL
NL
NL
NL

Note: Relevant quotes from respondents were inserted in file folder.

VITA

NAME: Nicole Marie Lamarre

PLACE OF BIRTH: Québec City, Québec

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1960

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: B.A. \ B.Ed, Queen's University, 1982

RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE: 6 years as a French immersion teacher in Alberta

PUBLICATIONS: Editor, Canadian Parents for French for Alberta
publications (1983-85)